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# HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

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# HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

BY

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LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

SECOND SERIES.

*'I will at least hope that these volumes may encourage a spirit of research into history, and may in some measure assist in directing it; that they may contribute to the conviction that history is to be studied as a whole, and according to its philosophical divisions, not such as merely geographical and chronological; that the history of Greece and Rome is not an idle inquiry about remote ages and forgotten institutions, but a living picture of things present, fitted not so much for the curiosity of the scholar, as the instruction of the statesman and the citizen.'*—Arnold, *Preface to Thucydides*, vol. iii.

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# PREFACE.

The present collection is that which was spoken of in the Preface to the second edition of my former series of Essays. The Essays now reprinted chiefly relate to earlier periods of history than those which were dealt with in the former volume —to the times commonly known as 'ancient' or 'classical.' I need hardly say that to me those names simply mark convenient halting-places in the one continuous history of European civilization. They mark the time when political life was confined to the two great Mediterranean peninsulas, and when the Teutonic and Slavonic races had as yet hardly shown themselves on the field of history. I should be well pleased some day to connect the two series by a third, which might deal with the intermediate times, with those times which I look on as the true Middle Ages, the times when the Roman and Teutonic elements of modern Europe stood side by side, and had not yet been worked together into a third thing distinct from either.

In reprinting these Essays, I have followed nearly the same course which I followed in the former series. As most of them were written before those which appeared in my former series, they have, on the whole, needed a greater amount of revision, and a greater number of notes to point out the times and circumstances under which they were written. In the process of revision I have found myself able to do very much in the way of improving and simplifying the style. In almost every page I have found it easy to put some plain English word, about whose meaning there can be no doubt, instead of those needless French or Latin words which are thought to add dignity to style, but which in truth only add vagueness. I am in no way ashamed to find that I can write purer and clearer English now than I did fourteen or fifteen years back; and I think it well to mention the fact for the encouragement of younger writers. The common temptation

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of beginners is to write in what they think a more elevated fashion. It needs some years of practice before a man fully takes in the truth that, for real strength and above all for real clearness, there is nothing like the old English speech of our fathers.

All the Essays in this volume, except the first, were written as reviews. When the critical part of the article took the shape of discussion, whether leading to agreement or to difference, of the works of real scholars like Bishop Thirlwall, Mr. Grote, and Dr. Merivale, I have let it stand pretty much as it was first written. But the parts which were given to pointing out the mistakes of inferior writers I have for the most part struck out. On this principle I had to sacrifice nearly the whole of the article headed 'Herodotus and his Commentators,' in the National Review for October 1862. I have kept only a small part of it as a note to one of the other Essays. I have done this, not because there is a word in that or in any other article of the kind which I now differ from or regret, but because, while the unflinching exposure of errors in the passing literature of the day is the highest duty of the periodical critic, it is out of place in writings which lay any claim to lasting value. I do not think I have sinned against my own rule in reprinting my articles in the Saturday Review on the German works of Mommsen and Curtius. Both are scholars of the highest order, and, as such, I trust that I have dealt with them with the respect that they deserve. But if, as there seems to be some danger, Curtius should displace Grote in the hands of English students, and if Mommsen should be looked up to as an infallible oracle, as Niebuhr was in my own Oxford days, I believe that the result would be full of evil, not only for historical truth, but, in the case of Mommsen, for political morality also.

I have to renew my thanks to the publishers of the Edinburgh Review and to the editors and publishers of the other periodicals in which the Essays appeared, for the leave kindly given to me to reprint them in their present form.

SOMERLEAZE, WELLS.
*January 7th*, 1873.

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# HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

## I.

### ANCIENT GREECE AND MEDIÆVAL ITALY.

The history of the Italian peninsula forms, in many respects, the most important and the most fascinating chapter in the history of the middle ages. Every part indeed of the history of those wonderful times has its own special charm; each has its special attraction for minds of a particular class. Upon the English statesman or jurist the early annals of our own country have a claim above all others. But a knowledge of those annals is very imperfect without some knowledge both of the kindred nations of Northern Europe and of the once kindred and then antagonistic powers of Gaul. To minds of another class, who view history with philological or antiquarian rather than with political eyes, the laws, the languages, the monuments of Scandinavia and Northern Germany will be of primary, instead of subsidiary, value. The long struggle between the Christian and the Saracen, the early liberties of Aragon and Castile, clothe the Iberian peninsula with an interest at once political and romantic. Even the obscure annals of the Slavonic nations are not without a charm of their own, and they have a most important bearing upon recent events. But to the scholar, whose love for historical research has been first kindled among the remains of Greek and Roman antiquity, no delight will be so great as that of tracing out every relic of their influence, every event or institution which can be connected with them either by analogy or by direct derivation. The mere student of words, the mere dreamer over



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classic lore, is indeed tempted to cast aside the mediæval and modern history both of Greece and Italy as a mere profanation of the ancient. But a more enlarged and practical love of antiquity will not so dwell upon the distant past as to neglect more recent scenes which are its natural complement and commentary. And the scenes which thus attract the scholar may challenge also the attention of the political and ecclesiastical inquirer. Our knowledge of the political life of Rome, of the intellectual life of Greece, of the religious life of early Christendom, is imperfect indeed without some knowledge of the long annals of the Eastern Empire. There we may behold the political immortality of one race, the literary immortality of another; there we may learn how a language and a religion can reconstruct a nation; we may trace the force and the weakness of a centralized despotism, and may marvel at the destiny which chose out such a power to be the abiding bulwark of Christianity and civilization. But over the other classic peninsula a higher interest lingers. If both Greece and Rome still lived on in the mingled being of the Byzantine Empire, they rose again to a more brilliant life among the Popes, the Cæsars, and the Republics of mediæval Italy. The political power of Rome still survived in theory in the hands of German Emperors, while in very truth the lordly spirit of the Imperial city sprang into new being, and founded a wider empire, under the guidance of Italian Pontiffs. And besides this twofold life of Rome, the life of Hellas lives once more in the rise and fall, the wars and revolutions, of countless independent commonwealths. The theatre was less favourable; the results were less splendid; but the reproduction was as close as such a reproduction can ever be, and the text and the commentary should never be studied apart.

To the general English reader the history of mediæval Italy is commonly very little known. It forms no part of the stereotyped educational course for either sex. Few remain wholly ignorant of Greece and Rome in the old world, of

France and England in the new; few are altogether without some idea of those later wars and treaties which have changed the general face of Europe. But this forms the usual boundary of the historical course; further inquiry is left to those who pass their lives in deciphering illegible records or in harmonizing discordant chronicles. Most people carry in their memories the succession of all the Kings of England and of most of the Kings of France, but nobody remembers the Doges of Venice any more than the Emperors of Constantinople. And yet a certain aspect of the historic life of Italy is familiar to every one. No land has produced more names which are familiar to the lips of every man, woman, and child. Every one can talk of Dante and Petrarch and Ariosto; every one knows 'the age of Leo the Tenth,' and most people know that his character of Mæcenas was one which he inherited from his forefathers. It were well for Italian history, as for Italy itself, if its reputation of this kind had been somewhat less splendid. As the Medici destroyed Italian freedom, so their fame has overshadowed the purer fame of Italy. The like fate indeed has befallen ancient Greece likewise. Athens is, in popular conception, the parent of art and philosophy, far more than the parent of civil justice and political freedom. Athenian poetry and speculation have overshadowed the glory of Athenian democracy; Sophoklês and Plato have dimmed the brighter fame of Kleisthenês and Periklês. In like manner Italy is looked upon so wholly as the land of poetry and art, as to obscure its higher character as the land which affords greater treasures of political science than any other land save Greece itself. And this more popular aspect has tended to throw a very false colouring over those parts of political history which are inseparably connected with the history of art and literature. If the earlier times are thought of at all, it is because the wars of Guelf and Ghibelin are needed as a key to Dante, instead of Dante being needed as a commentary on the wars of Guelf and Ghibelin. And in later times, the blaze of poetic and artistic splendour makes men forget that the age of Italy's apparent glory was in truth that of her real degrada-

tion. Everything is judged by a false standard. It is enough for a Pope or a prince to have gathered together the works of ancient genius, and to have encouraged those of contemporary skill. It is enough if he filled his palace with pictures and statues, and surrounded himself with flatterers who could sing his praises alike in Latin and in Italian verse. These merits will wipe out the overthrow of a dozen free constitutions; they will fully atone for stirring up unjust wars, for public perfidy and private licentiousness. Of this mode of treatment the writings of Mr. Roscoe are the foremost example. He tells us in his preface 'that the *mere historical events* of the fifteenth century, so far as they regarded Italy, could not deeply interest his countrymen in the eighteenth,' but 'that the progress of letters and arts would be attended to with pleasure in every country where they were cultivated and protected.' No rational person will ever undervalue either the practice or the history of 'letters and arts;' but surely the progress and decay of political freedom is a subject the most interesting of all to every country which professes to enjoy and to value the greatest of merely human blessings.

That few people go deeper into the matter than this, though it is to be regretted, is hardly to be wondered at. Italian history is highly important; but it is, of all histories, the most difficult to carry in one's head. The details are hopeless. The brain grows dizzy among the endless wars and revolutions of petty tyrants and petty commonwealths; three or four schemes of policy and warfare twine round one another; and no such factitious aid is supplied to the memory as is afforded by the succession of reigns and dynasties in France and England. Can any man living repeat—we do not say all the Tyrants of Rimini or Faenza, but all the Popes, all the Doges, all the Lords, Dukes, and Marquesses of Milan and Ferrara? It would need a faculty savouring as much of Jedediah Buxton as of Niebuhr, to say without book how many times Genoa became subject to Milan and how many times to France; how often the Adorni drove out the Fregosi, and how many times the Fregosi did the like by the Adorni.

As long as the Western Emperors still kept any real sovereignty in Italy, the chronology of their reigns afford something like a clue; but, alas, it guides us only a very little way, and it fails us just when a clue becomes most needful. We are driven to aid our recollection by arbitrary synchronisms. The death of Manfred, the birth of Dante, and the death of Simon of Montfort; the establishment of Mahomet at Constantinople and the establishment of Francesco Sforza at Milan; the Castilian conquest of Granada and the invasion of Italy by Charles the Eighth;—all these are sets of events which respectively come within two or three years of each other. But one date beams across our path like a solitary guiding star; the year 1378 claims the everlasting gratitude of the baffled chronologer; it must have been some gracious decree of destiny for his especial benefit, which procured that a single revolution of the seasons should witness the beginning of the War of Chioggia, of the Sedition of the Ciompi, and of the Great Schism of the West.

It is then nothing very astonishing if a history which the professed student cannot undertake always to keep in his memory, should seem to the ordinary reader to be one which he may pass by altogether. It is a fact that there are those whom an identity of name and numeral has misled into the belief that the prince who stood barefoot at the gates of Canosa was one and the same with the prince whose white plume served as oriflamme upon the field of Ivry. Pity not to have carried out the process to its full extent, and to have landed the triple-bodied Gêryôn by the headland of Ravenspur and guided him in safety through the fight of Shrewsbury. We once saw, in a popular description of Milan Cathedral, an expression of wonder that so vast a work should have been undertaken by 'the *petty lord* of that and a few other neighbouring towns.' If these are fair samples of the average Englishman's belief as to Italian chronology and Italian politics, it is really high time for that belief to be very largely set right. To confound Henry of Franconia and Henry of Navarre is sheer ignorance, possibly of the invincible class.

To have heard of Gian-Galeazzo Visconti, and to mistake him for a 'petty lord,' is really the greater sin of the two. Such an error could only arise either from a profound reverence for a mere title, or else from an incapacity to look beyond the extent which a country occupies on the map. The Lord of Milan was not a King; till he received the ducal coronet he did not belong to any class of acknowledged sovereigns; his territory was far smaller than that of France or England or Castile. But in wealth, in population, in every element of material prosperity, this 'petty' territory surpassed every land beyond the Alps, and its rulers directed its resources with a far more absolute command than princes of higher dignity held over their wider domains. Gibbon remarks that, when John Palaiologos came to Ferrara, the Roman Emperor of the East found in the Marquess of that city a sovereign more powerful than himself. In like manner the 'petty lord' of Milan was in very truth a prince of greater weight in European politics than the Bohemian Cæsar of whom, for an empty title, he stooped to profess himself the vassal.

The fact is that many of the particular facts of Italian history, as they are extremely hard to remember, are really by no means worth remembering. The particular event, looked at by itself, touched perhaps the interests only of an inconsiderable district, and it had no great direct influence over the particular events which followed it. The same stages repeat themselves over again in the history of a hundred cities; every town gradually wins and as gradually loses its liberties; in each the demagogue stealthily grows into the chief of the commonwealth; in each the chief of the commonwealth stealthily or forcibly grows into the Tyrant; in many the Tyrant or his successor wins an outward legitimacy for the wrong by some ceremony which admits him into the favoured order of acknowledged sovereigns. The general outline of events in a few of the greater states should of course be carefully remembered; but, beyond this, little can be attempted, except the general picture which the details serve to produce, and the deep political lessons

which ought to be drawn from its contemplation. We read the details, and we are content to forget them; but we keep in our memories the great characteristics of one of the most stirring times of man's being. We learn that the powers of the human heart and intellect are not dwarfed or cramped by confinement to a seemingly narrow field of action. We learn that the citizen of the pettiest commonwealth is a being of a higher nature than the slave of the mightiest despotism. We learn that man, under the same circumstances, is essentially the same in the most distant times and countries. The small commonwealths of Italy could not help playing over again a part essentially the same as that which the small commonwealths of Greece had played so many ages earlier.

Rightly to treat a history of this kind is indeed a hard, if a noble, task, and it calls for an historical genius of the highest order. It is no small matter to group and harmonize together the contemporary stories of endless states all full of life and energy; at once to avoid wearying the reader with needless detail, and to avoid confounding him between five or six parallel streams of narrative. The task has been accomplished in a manner perhaps as nearly approaching perfection as human nature allows in the immortal work of Sismondi. If even in his pages weariness sometimes creeps over us as we follow the endless series of wars and revolutions, it is soon forgotten in the eloquence with which he adorns the more striking portions of the narrative, and in the depth and clearness with which he draws forth the general teaching of the whole. If he fails in anything, it is in his arrangement of the parallel narratives. Italy often witnessed at the same moment a war of aggrandizement in Lombardy and a domestic revolution at Genoa or Florence. Rival Popes were troubling the Christian world with bulls and counter-bulls, with Councils and counter-Councils. Rival Kings meanwhile were wasting the fields of Campania and Apulia in quarrels wholly personal and dynastic. In reading the history of such times, we sometimes find that Sismondi hurries us rather too suddenly from place to place, and joins on one unfinished

narrative to another. He had not quite mastered that wonderful power by which Gibbon contrived to avoid confusion in describing the various contemporary events of a wider, though hardly a busier scene. As for graver charges against him, that Sismondi is a party writer may be freely confessed. But what historian who understands the time of which he writes can fail to be so? Sismondi draws republics in their best colours; Roscoe does the same by Popes and princes. The reader must make his option, and decide as he best may between the two contending advocates.*

The point of view which gives to mediæval Italy its highest importance in the general history of mankind is one on which Sismondi himself has only partially entered. This is the point of view which takes in in a single glance the history of mediæval Italy, and of ancient Greece. The really profitable task is to compare together the two periods in which the highest civilization of the age was confined to a cluster of commonwealths, small in point of territory, but rising, in all political and social enlightenment, far above the greatest contemporary empires. The two periods can never be understood unless they are studied in this way, side by side. Thucydides and Villani, Sismondi and Grote, should always lie open at the same moment. And close as is the analogy between the two periods, yet a subject of study perhaps still more profitable is afforded by the points of contrast which they suggest.

It may be well to pause at starting, in order to deal with an objection which may be brought against this whole treatment of the subject. Many students of history have a general dislike to any system of historical analogies. Nor can

* [I have struck out a paragraph of criticism on some modern English books of no great importance, but I have left what I said of Sismondi, as it records my impression of his work in itself, before I had read much of the original authorities of any part of his history. Since then I have, as I hope I have shown in my former volume of Essays, given some attention to the original sources of at least some parts of Italian history. But I have not since then read Sismondi through; I am therefore hardly able to say how far the comparison of his work with his authorities would either confirm or modify what I have said of him.]

the dislike be called wholly unreasonable, when we think of the extravagant and unphilosophical way in which such analogies have sometimes been applied. It is certain that no age can exactly reproduce any age which has gone before it, if only because that age has gone before it. The one is the first of its class, the other the second; the one is an original, the other is at least a repetition, if not a direct copy. And besides this, no two nations ever found themselves in exactly the same circumstances. Distance of space will modify the likeness between two societies, otherwise analogous, which are in being at the same time. Distance of time will bring in points of unlikeness between parallels which repeat themselves even on the same ground. In fact, in following out an analogy, it is often the points of unlikeness on which we are most tempted to dwell. But this is in very truth the most powerful of witnesses to their general likeness. We do not stop to think of differences in detail, unless the general picture presents a likeness which is broad and unmistakeable. We may reckon up the points of contrast between ancient Greece and mediæval Italy; but we never stop to count in how many ways a citizen of Athens differed from a subject of the Great King, or what are the points of unlikeness between the constitution of the United States from that of the Empire of all the Russias.

On the other hand, analogies which really exist are often passed by, merely because they lie beneath the surface. The essential likeness between two states of things is often disguised by some purely external difference. Thus, at first sight no difference can seem greater than that which we see between our present artificial state of society and politics and the primitive institutions of our forefathers before the Norman Conquest. Yet our position and sentiments are, in many important respects, less widely removed from that ruder time than from intermediate ages whose outward garb hardly differs from our own. In many cases, the old Teutonic institutions have come up again, silently and doubtlessly unwittingly, under new names, and under forms modified by altered circumstances.

Thus the *Folcland* of early times, the common estate of the nation, was, as the royal power increased, gradually turned into the *Terra Regis*, the personal estate of the sovereign. Now that the Crown lands are applied to the public service under the control of the House of Commons, what is it but a return to the old institution of *Folcland* in a shape fitted to the ideas of modern times?* Again, the remark has been made that there can be no real likeness between ancient Athens and modern England, because the press, confessedly so important an engine among ourselves, had no being in the commonwealth of Periklês. The difference here is obvious at first sight; it is moreover the sign of a more real and more important difference; but neither of them is enough to destroy the essential analogy. The real difference is, not that the Athenians had no printing, but the far more important difference that they had very little writing. Now this is simply the difference which cannot fail to exist between the citizen of a southern state confined to a single city, and the citizen of an extensive kingdom in a northern climate. The one passed his life in the open air; the other is driven by physical necessity to the fireside either of his home or his club. The one could be personally present and personally active in the deliberations of the commonwealth; the other needs some artificial means to make up for his unavoidable absence from the actual scene of debate. The one, in short, belonged to a seeing and hearing, the other belongs to a reading public; the one heard Periklês, Nikias, or Kleôn with his own ears, the other listens to his Cobden, his Disraeli, or his Palmerston only through the agency of paper and printer's ink. The difference between reading in print and reading in manuscript is a wide one; the difference between reading in manuscript and not reading at all is wider still: but the widest difference of all lies between free discussion in any shape and the absence

* [This subject, with one or two kindred ones, has been worked out more fully in the third chapter of my 'Growth of the English Constitution.' See pp. 132–134.]

of free discussion. The narrow strait between Athens and England sinks into nothing beside the impassable gulf which fences off both from Sparta or Venice or 'imperial' France. Where there is free discussion of every subject of public interest, where no man is afraid to speak his mind on the most important affairs of the commonwealth, it matters comparatively little whether the intercourse between citizen and citizen is carried on with their own tongues or through the medium of type and paper. Thoughts pent up under the bondage of a despotism or an oligarchy would gladly catch at either means of expression, without being over-nice as to the comparative merits of the two methods.

In the case both of ancient Greece and of mediæval Italy, the nation which, at that particular period, stood far above all others in every material and intellectual advantage is found incapable or careless of a combined national government: each is split up into endless states, many of them of the smallest possible size. This system of 'separate town-autonomy' is indeed by no means peculiar to old Greece or to mediæval Italy. These two lands are merely those which supplied its most perfect examples, those which showed it forth on the greatest scale, and adorned it with the richest accompaniments of art, literature, and general cultivation. The separate city-community, as Mr. Grote has shown, was the earliest form of organized freedom. It is the simplest and the most obvious form. To unite a large territory into a federal commonwealth or a constitutional monarchy implies a much higher and later stage of political progress. Or it might be more accurate to say that it needs such a higher and later stage to show that those forms of government are really capable of combining freedom and order. For, in old Greece and the neighbouring states, it was precisely the most advanced states which clung most fondly to their separate town-autonomy. It is only among the less advanced and half-barbaric portions of the race that we find the rude germs

of the other two forms of freedom. Aitolia, Phôkis,* and other backward portions of the Hellenic race, had something like federal commonwealths. The half-barbarian states of Macedonia and Molossis had something like constitutional monarchies. Yet no one would think of setting their governments on a level with the democracy of Athens, or even with such moderate oligarchies as Corinth, Chios, or Rhodes. In the same way, in primæval Italy, the principle of town-autonomy was greatly modified in the Latin, Etruscan, and Samnite federations. The one Italian city which always clave to its distinct autonomy was the one which rose to the empire of Italy and the world. In mediæval Switzerland again there arose a freedom purer, if less brilliant, than that of mediæval Italy; but there town-autonomy was still more largely modified. It was modified by the relation, lax as it was, of the federal tie, and by the existence of rural democracies alongside of the urban commonwealths. And, during the best days of the League, it was further modified by an acknowledgement of the power of the Emperors far more full than they ever could win in Italy. In other parts of Germany, free cities flourished indeed; but they were mere exceptions to princely rule; they were closely connected with the chief of the Empire; they rejoiced in the title of 'free Imperial city,' which, in the ears of a Greek, would have sounded like a contradiction in terms. In France the cities maintained, for a while, their internal republican constitutions; in Spain they were even invested with supremacy over considerable surrounding dictricts; but, in both cases, they fell before a kingly power stronger and more encroaching than that of the German Emperors. England had mere municipalities; the greater strength of the central power, the more general diffusion of political rights, neither allowed nor needed the formation of even tributary republics. But, had the monarchy founded by the Conqueror possessed no greater inherent

* I do not mention Bœotia, because the hardly disguised sovereignty of Thebes hinders it from being regarded as a truly federal state.

vigour than the monarchy founded by Charles the Great, it is easy to conceive that London, York, and Bristol might have imitated, though they would hardly have rivalled, the career of Florence, Bern, and Nürnberg.*

It may perhaps be worth noting that freedom, and freedom too in this particular form of town-autonomy, has never been left without a witness upon earth. Hellenic freedom was far from utterly wiped out, either at the fight of Chairôneia or at the sack of Corinth. The commonwealths of Rhodes and Byzantion, the wise confederacy of Lykia, kept at least an internal independence till Rome was becoming an acknowledged monarchy. And even then, one shoot of the old tree continued to flourish on a distant soil. Far away, on the northern shores of the Inhospitable Sea, for a thousand years after Sparta and Athens had sunk in bondage, did the Hellenic city of Cherson remain, the only state in the world where freedom and civilization were not divorced. In close connexion with the lords of Rome and Constantinople, the old Megarian colony still retained a freedom far more than municipal; its relation might be that of a dependent ally, but it was still alliance and not subjection. How many of the warriors and the tourists, how many of the ephemeral writers of the day, who have compassed the fortress of Sebastopol, so much as knew that they were treading on the ruins of the last of the Greek republics. Such was Cherson up to the ninth century; still free, still Greek, ruled by Hellenic Presidents, who slew Barbarian Kings in single combat. In the ninth century, under the Byzantine Theophilos, she ceased to be free; in the tenth, under the Russian Vladimir, she well nigh ceased to be Hellenic. But, by that time, freedom had begun to show itself once more in the western world. Free commercial commonwealths again arose on the Hadriatic and on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Venice, Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi might, as vassals or *slaves*† of the Byzantine Cæsar, withstand

* [See History of the Norman Conquest, iv. 208.]

† *ἡμεῖς δοῦλοι θέλομεν εἶναι τοῦ Ῥωμαίων βασίλεως.*—See Gibbon, cap. lx. note 37.

the claims of his Teutonic rival: but, in truth, they flourished in possession of a freedom with which neither Empire interfered. Venice, in later years, may be deemed to have more in common with despotic than with republican states; but the Campanian republics handed on the torch of freedom to those of Lombardy; Milan and Alessandria handed it on to Florence and Sienna, to Zürich, Bern, and Geneva. Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, the most thrilling names of all, needed neither precept nor example to guide them to a democracy more perfect than the world had seen since Antipatros entered Athens. But the freedom of the mountains is distinct from the freedom of the cities; the old uncontaminated Switzer was not an Athenian or a Florentine, but an Aitolian who had unlearned, or had never fallen into, the turbulence and brigandage of his race.

The results of this system of town-autonomy seem strange to us in these days of wide-spread empires. We are tempted to mock at political history on so small a scale; we are tempted to despise the revolutions of independent commonwealths less populous than many an English borough. Both in Greece and in Italy, towns which, in most lands, would have merely swelled the private estate of some neighbouring lord took to themselves every attribute of sovereignty, and, in their external relations and their internal revolutions, they exhibited greater political activity than the mightiest contemporary kingdoms. Each city has its own national being, around which every feeling of patriotism gathers; each calls its citizens under its banner, to harry the fields and homesteads of its neighbour, or to defend its own from the like harm. Each has its own internal political life; each is rent by its own factions; each witnesses the alternate sway of democracy and oligarchy, or beholds both fall beneath the rod of some foreign or domestic tyrant. Greece and Italy alike set before us a scene of endless war—of war of a kind at once more terrible and more ennobling than the political contests of later times. In the wars of a great monarchy the subject has no voice on the question of war and peace; he has often

but a faint knowledge indeed of the reasons why a war is either begun or ended. Except in the case of invasion, war, to all but a professional class, means simply increase of taxation and the occasional loss of a friend or kinsman. Even when a country is invaded, it can only be a very small part of a great kingdom on which the scourge directly lights. Very different was the warfare of the old Greek and Italian commonwealths. Every citizen had a voice in the debate and a hand in the struggle. Each was ready personally to inflict, and personally to suffer, all the hardships of war. Each man might fairly look forward, some time in his life, to witness the pillage of his crops and the burning of his house, even if he and his escaped the harder doom of massacre, violation, or slavery. In Greece and Italy alike war went through two stages. In the first, it was carried on by a citizen militia, of whom every man had a personal interest in the strife. In the second, the duty of doing or warding off injury was entrusted to hireling banditti, heedless in what cause their lances were levelled. In Greece and Italy alike, the internal history of each city shows us a picture of every stage of political progress; each grows and decays with a swiftness to which larger states hardly ever afford a parallel. In each case we see that these little communities could cherish a warmth of patriotism, an intensity of political life, beyond example in the records of extensive kingdoms. A large well-governed state secures the blessings of order and tranquillity to a greater number; but it does so at the expense of condemning a large proportion even of its citizens to practical nonentity. Citizenship is less valued, and it is therefore more freely conferred. But in the single city, each full citizen has his intellectual and political faculties nourished and sharpened to the highest pitch. Athens and Florence could reckon a soldier, a statesman, or a diplomatist, in every head of a free household. Citizenship then was a personal right and a personal privilege; it was a possession far too dearly valued to be granted at random to the mob of slaves or foreigners. In such a state of things,

patriotism was not a sober conviction or a grave matter of duty; it was the blind and fervent devotion of a child to his parent, or rather of a lover to his mistress. To the Athenian or the Florentine his country was not a mere machine for defending life and property; it was a living thing, whose thoughts worked in his own brain, whose passions beat in his heart, whose deeds were done by his hands. Such a patriotism might be narrow, ill-regulated,* inconsistent with still better and loftier feelings; but it worked up the individual citizen to the highest pitch. Strange to say, it spread itself even among classes wholly cut off from political rights. 'Viva San Marco,' was as stirring a cry to the Venetian citizen, and even to the Lombard peasant, as to the foremost of the Zenos and the Morosini. When republican France stained herself with the greatest of recorded crimes, the German subject of Bern fought well nigh as zealously for his patrician master† as the freeman of Unterwalden fought for a democracy more full and true than that preached by the apostles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

But both Greece and Italy teach us that the political life of these small states, more intense, more vigorous, more glorious, while it lasts, either runs its course in a shorter time, or else sinks into more utter decay than that of states of greater extent. Three centuries, at the utmost, measure the political life of Athens and of Florence. At the end of that term Florence fell gloriously before irresistible enemies; Athens lingered on in far deeper degradation under Macedonian and Roman lordship. But a great nation, still more a great empire which is not a nation, may survive

* 'Es war in unsern Vätern, zur Zeit als die ersten bürgerlichen Gesetze sie zähmten, kein Begriff noch Gefühl von allgemeinen Rechten der Menschheit; bei ihnen war Summe der Moral, dass die Bürger gut und herzhaft seyen für ihre Städte, die Ritter für ihren Stand und Fürsten.'—J. von Müller, Gesch. der Schweiz, b. i. c. 16, § 7.

† For an instance of similar feelings extending themselves to soldiers, at least, belonging to subject races much worse off than the Italian and German subjects of Venice and Bern, see the famous speech of Brasidas in Thucydides, iv. 126, and Mr. Grote's comment, vol. vi. p. 610.

and flourish, age after age, by its mere power of silently recruiting the national life by new blood. This process can hardly take place, hardly at least without open revolution, in any community which, whether it be oligarchic or democratic, is grounded on the exclusive hereditary freedom of a single city. It may be the blood of conquerors, of subjects, or of refugees; the foreign element may either be silently assimilated or it may become openly dominant: in either case the nation is born anew. Rome was, in her origin, a single city; but she grew from a city into a nation, from a nation into an Empire, by granting her citizenship more freely than any other city on record. She grew up by the side of Greece, she conquered her, and, to all appearance, she outlived her. And yet, by the working of the same law, Greece outlived Rome. The blood, and even the language, of Rome died out; but her political being went on without a break in a Grecian city. The combined work of Greece and Rome, strengthened by a hundred rills of energetic barbarian blood from various quarters, survived every contemporary state in political duration, and still survives, as a vigorous and progressive nation, to our own times. So too with our own nation, one which, like the Greek, draws at once its name and its true being from one dominant stock, but which has been strengthened by the influx of successive waves of subjects, conquerors, and exiles. The germ of English freedom had begun to blossom centuries before the formation of the Lombard League; it did not put forth its full fruit till long after Italy was given up to the domination of French and Austrian and Spanish masters. Both Greece and Italy teach us the same lesson, that a nation divided into small states can, under ordinary circumstances, keep its independence only so long as its political world is confined to its own limits. When greater powers come vigorously and permanently on the scene, it must either fall altogether, or at most it may be allowed to drag on a degraded and precarious existence, if such a boon chance to fall in with schemes dictated by the mutual jealousies of the rival powers around it.

Besides this more general analogy, the history of Greece and Italy presents a fair parallel in the different periods into which it may, in each case, most naturally be divided. The most brilliant period in each is a time of strife indeed, of war and bloodshed and revolution; but it is still a time of lofty principles and feelings, in which even strife and confusion seem to go on according to a certain fixed law. Next comes a time when the national strength and virtue are fearfully impaired, and when no fixed principles can be traced out in the dealings of one state with another. But still the national independence lives on; it is still a strife of Greek against Greek, of Italian against Italian. At last we reach the lowest stage of overthrow and of degradation. Greece and Italy become the battlefields of contending strangers, the theatre of conflicts in which no patriotic native has any interest save simply to deliver his country from the presence of all the combatants alike. The analogy between these several periods in each country must not be pressed too far; it cannot be pressed nearly so far as the general analogy between the two political systems. A striking likeness however there really is, which it will be worth our while to trace out a little more in detail.

To the old struggle between Athens and Sparta there attaches that special kind of interest which belongs to a strife in which our sympathies cannot be exclusively claimed by either party. Among all the horrors of a wasting warfare and the still more fearful horrors of internal discord, notwithstanding Mêlian and Plataian massacres, Korkyraian seditions and Argeian skytalisms, there is still an ennobling spirit which reigns over the whole, to redeem the scene of perfidy and slaughter. We see that the conflict was inevitable, and that it was not wholly selfish on either side; it was not a struggle for private aggrandizement, but for political superiority; it was a war of contending races and contending principles; either side could afford scope, not only for military and political skill, but for the purest virtue and the most heroic self-devotion. The war is not waged by foreign hirelings careless as to

the cause in which they fought; it is not even entrusted to a professional class in the contending cities. The man whose head devises the political scheme is the man who carries out in his own person the military operations which are needed for it. The orator who proposes an enterprise is himself the general who executes it; the citizens who applaud his proposal are the soldiers who march under his command. No feeling of deadly hatred is to be seen between the two great opposing powers. Athens was stirred to far less bitterness by the political rivalry of Sparta than by her pettier contests with her neighbours of Megaris and Bœotia. Sparta too, in the full swing of her power, with all Greece crouching before her harmosts and her dekarchies, with the might of the Great King himself ready at her call, could yet cast aside with scorn the suggestion to carry vengeance beyond the bounds of political necessity. It might suit the border hatred of Thebes to make a sheep-walk of a dangerous neighbour-city; but Sparta knew her own greatness too well to deprive herself of her yokefellow and to put out one of the eyes of Greece.

The parallel to this period is to be found in those heroic days of mediæval Italy when the names of Guelf and Ghibelin were no unmeaning badges of hereditary feud, but were the true and speaking watchwords of the highest principles that can stir the breast of man.* It was indeed a strife of giants,

* It may perhaps be thought that a truer parallel to the struggle of the Lombard cities against the Swabian Emperors is to be found in the struggle of the Hellenic cities against the Persian Kings. It is easy to answer that the war of Guelf and Ghibelin was not mere resistance to foreign invasion; that it was an internal conflict in Italy itself; that, though the Imperial claims were backed by German armies, yet many Italian cities enrolled themselves with no less zeal under the Imperial banners. The rejoinder is no less easy, namely, that the Persian War may also be called an internal struggle in Greece itself, because many Greek cities enrolled themselves under the banners of Xerxes. But it is impossible to look on an acknowledged Emperor of the Romans, even of Teutonic blood, as so wholly external to Italy as the King of the Medes and Persians was to Hellas. It is impossible to look on the Ghibelins of Italy as such mere traitors as the medizing Greeks. The fact is that, as none of these parallels can be perfectly exact, the first struggle against Frederick Barbarossa has many points in common with the Persian War; while the second conflict with his grandson forms the best analogy to the

when the crozier of the Pontiff and the sceptre of the Cæsar met in deadly conflict. The vigorous youth of the Teutonic race had decked itself in the Imperial garb of elder days, and appealed to the proudest associations, both of the old and of the new state of things. And a yet truer heir of that ancient sway sat as the homeborn guardian of Rome and Italy, the successor of the Fisherman, the maker and the deposer of Kings and Emperors. One disputant called on the political loyalty of either race alike. The Roman Cæsar demanded the humble duty of the subject, laid down for ever in Rome's imperishable Law. The King of Italy appealed to a truer and loftier fidelity, to those sacred engagements which riveted the personal bond of suzerain and vassal. His rival called on the mysterious powers of an unseen world; his empire acknowledged no earthly boundaries, as his authority rested on no human grant. He stood forth as the vicegerent of his Creator, to bind and to loose, to build up and to pluck down; his ban could sweep either crown from the brow of his rival, and could release alike from the obligations of Roman slavery and of Teutonic freedom. All things to all men, the Pontiffs of those days knew when to bless the swords of conquerors and when to hallow the aspirations of insurgents. And now beneath the shadow of their lofty claims grew up that germ of freedom which the deep policy of Rome knew alike when to cherish and when to stifle in the bud. Hildebrand pitted against Henry, Alexander against Barbarossa, Innocent against the second Frederick, was indeed a strife which no man could stand by and not draw his sword either for the throne of Cæsar or the chair of Peter. Each cause had in it

Peloponnesian War. Frederick the Second could hardly be deemed a foreigner in Italy; the enmity which he awakened was political and religious, hardly at all strictly national. But the Guelf and Ghibelin contest, so long as those names retained any real meaning, can hardly be looked on as other than a single whole, and that whole certainly bears more analogy to the Peloponnesian War than to anything else in Grecian history.

[I have since spoken more fully of the characteristics of this period of Italian history, in the Essay headed 'Frederick the First, King of Italy' in my former series of Essays.]

an element of truth and righteousness. One side might boast that it maintained the lawful rights of civil government at once against priestly despotism and against political licentiousness. Twofold might be the answer of his rival. The priestly despot did but assert the claims of man's spiritual element against the brute force which had usurped the name of government. The political rebel did but maintain the cause of municipal and national freedom against the arbitrary exactions of feudal lords and alien Emperors. A warfare like this could not fail to call forth on either side man's highest and noblest feelings; each cause was supported from the purest enthusiasm and the most unselfish principles of duty. Who can doubt but that the loyalty of Pisa and Pavia to the Imperial cause was as true and ennobling a feeling as any that roused their foes for the Holy Church and the liberties of Milan? And the chiefs on either side alike displayed the surest proof of true nobility; they were greatest in the hour of adversity. Never was the spirit of Hildebrand or of Alexander more unbroken than when they marched forth to exile; never were their claims more lofty than when all the powers of earth seemed arrayed against them. Henry indeed was unworthy of his cause; but the spirit of Innocent himself was not more truly lordly than that of the Cæsars of Hohenstaufen. Frederick the Second, deposed and excommunicated, branded as a tyrant and a heretic, brought forth the diadems of all his realms, and dared the world to touch the heirlooms of Augustus and of Charles the Great. But he had his vices and his weaknesses. The meteoric splendours of his course must pale before the steady and enduring glory of his illustrious grandfather. Few characters in history can awaken a warmer feeling of sympathy than the indomitable Barbarossa. He might be hard, while opposition lasted, to an extent which our age justly brands as cruelty; yet his untiring devotion to claims which he deemed founded on eternal right, his resolution while the struggle lasted, his faithfulness* to his

* A single breach of faith is all that has ever been alleged against Frederick during the whole of this long struggle. (See Sismondi, ii. 211, 272.) In the

engagements even in the hour of triumph, are qualities only less honourable than the prudence and generosity with which, when the day had finally turned against him, he accepted a destiny which he could no longer withstand, with which he threw himself honestly into altered circumstances, and dwelled as an ally where he was no longer accepted as a master. Yet who can fail to do equal honour to the no less noble spirits who won the victory against him? Cold indeed must be the heart which could refuse to beat in concert with that burst of zeal for Church and freedom which scattered the chivalry of Swabia before the charge of the Company of Death,* and drove the Emperor of the Romans, the King of Germany and Italy, to seek safety in ignominious flight before the armed burghers of a rebellious city.

In one part of the field indeed the scene puts on another character. Sicilian history hardly forms part of the history of Italy, though it is closely connected with it. This is true even of the continental, and much more so of the insular kingdom. Neither presents the ordinary phænomena of Italian history. Neither formed part of the Western Empire or of the Kingdom of Italy. While Henry the Third held a nearly absolute sway over his German and Italian realms, the greater part of the modern Neapolitan kingdom still obeyed the throne of Constantinople, and the island of Sicily was still numbered among the possessions of the Arabian Prophet. The earliest Italian commonwealths, Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi, arose indeed in what afterwards became Sicilian territory; there was even, after the death of Frederick the Second, a short republican period in Sicily itself; but neither country developed any lasting system of commonwealths, like those of Lombardy and Tuscany. Their position is rather analogous to that of those great fiefs at the other end of Italy which have grown

age of Henry the Second and Philip Augustus, this is really no slight praise for a prince whose good faith was so often and so severely tried.

[My reference here was to Frederick's breach of faith at the siege of Alessandria, of which I have said something in my former series, p. 276.]

* At the battle of Legnano, A.D. 1176. (See Sismondi, ii. 219, 221.)

up into the modern kingdom of Sardinia.* Both have much more in common with the feudal states in other parts of Europe than with other Italian governments, whether republican or tyrannical. During the whole period with which we are concerned, both the Sicilies possessed hereditary monarchs and a feudal nobility. They were indeed torn by civil wars and revolutions, but the object of the struggle was always to put one King in the room of another, not to put freedom in the room of both.

Still it could hardly fail that the divisions and revolutions of Sicily should, as it were, group themselves under the two great parties which divided the rest of Italy. Their history shows us a peculiar and instructive modification of the controversy between Guelf and Ghibelin. It took the form which was naturally impressed upon it by the monarchic traditions of the country. What was in northern Italy a strife of principles became in the south a mere struggle between nations and dynasties—between the house of Hohenstaufen and the house of Anjou—in the end between the power of Spain and the power of France. The strife which began between Manfred of Swabia and Charles of Anjou is carried on at intervals down to the days of Francis of Valois and Charles of Austria. The claims of the old Imperial family pass away into the line of Aragon, till the remote descendant of that line is again enabled to back them with the majesty of the Roman Empire and with the more real might of Burgundy and Castile. In the earlier stages of the conflict it differs from the form which it took in Northern Italy, inasmuch as one side alone can enlist our sympathies. We may be balanced in our regard between Hildebrand and Henry, between Alexander and Frederick, but every heart must beat for Manfred and Conradin and Frederick of Aragon against the foreign tyrants and hireling Pontiffs with whom they struggled. Yet small indeed was the lasting good which arose even from the righteous and heroic conflict which delivered insular Sicily

* [This was written, it must be remembered, before Piedmont had grown into Italy, even before it had recovered Milan.]

from her foreign masters. Sicily cast off the yoke, but it was only by the fatal help of the stranger. The vesper-bell of Palermo rang the knell of French domination, but it summoned the more lasting oppressor of Aragon to take possession of the spoil. One wise and valiant ruler did Sicily gain from the foreign stock: the noble Frederick threw himself honestly into her interests, and ruled her as her native sovereign. But his line died out in a succession of *faineants*, and their foreign kinsman presently grasped the opportunity of joining the island to his ancestral kingdom. Naples and Sicily alike failed of the highest glory and happiness; but the contrast of their destiny was strange. Sicily, which cast off the yoke of the Angevin, sank first into utter insignificance, and then into the deadening position of a subject province. Naples, which patiently bore his tyranny, though torn by civil wars and disputed successions, still kept for two centuries and a half an independent place among the powers of Europe, an important, sometimes a dominant, place among those of Italy.

Coming back to our more general subject, we may mark that, during the whole of the first pair of parallel periods, both in Greece and Italy, there is little difficulty in remembering the political and military relations of the several states. It is throughout a strife of principles; each city acts according to an attachment of long standing to the Athenian or the Lacedæmonian alliance, to the cause of the Church or of the Empire. Corinth leagued with Athens or Plataia with Sparta, Florence false to the cause of freedom or Pisa forsaking the Imperial eagles, would be something little less than a contradiction in terms. How thoroughly Greece was divided between the two great political ideas which were embodied in Athens and Sparta is best shown in the fruitless attempt made by the Spartan allies, in a moment of pique, to put together confederacies upon other principles. All the intrigues of Alkibiadês, in the period which immediately followed the Peace of Nikias, did but bring about a temporary

confusion; the cities speedily settled themselves again in their old positions as followers of the two ruling states. The neutral Argos was indeed won to the side of Athens, but no member of the rival confederacy permanently fell away. If any seeming exceptions are found, if cities suddenly changed their policy, it only shows how deeply the contending principles had in each case divided the national mind. Men often loved their party better than their city, and they often forced their city to shape its policy to meet the interests of their party. Such a change implies no fickleness, no change of sentiment in an existing government: it bespeaks an internal revolution which has placed in other hands the guidance of the policy of the state. The oligarchs are triumphant or the people have won the victory; the Ghibelin has vanquished the Guelf or the Guelf has avenged his wrongs upon the Ghibelin; the haughty leader at least exchanges places with the homeless exile, even if no sterner doom is the penalty for the evil deeds of his own day of triumph. Does Korkyra open her harbours to the Athenian fleet which her rulers have so lately driven from her shores? It is because the people have won the day, and have taken a fearful vengeance upon sacrilege and oppression. Does the banner of Manfred float on the walls of that Florence which was so lately the chosen citadel of the Guelf? The field of Arbia has been won, and Farinata has saved his country from her doom, though the good deed may not deliver himself from his burning grave. Till the power of Athens is broken at Aigospotamos and the insolence of Sparta loses her the affections of her allies—till Roman Cæsars sink into heads of a Germanic Federation and Roman Pontiffs into tools of the Kings of France—this fixedness of purpose in parties and commonwealths prevails through both the analogous periods, and renders their study far more fascinating and far less perplexing than that of the times which immediately follow them.

In the next period this steadiness of principles is altogether lost; wars and alliances are begun and broken off according to the immediate interest of the moment; instead of two

parties ranged permanently and consistently under their several leaders, we behold an ever-shifting scene in which Sparta, Athens, Thebes, Corinth, Elis, and Mantineia, or Rome, Milan, Venice, Naples, Florence, and Genoa, figure in every possible variety of friendship and enmity. In Greece the old ruling states become thoroughly worn out, and new powers flash across the scene with meteoric brilliancy. Athens becomes materially, and Sparta morally, incapable of acting as leader of a great confederacy. The genius and virtue of Epameinôndas raise Thebes to a momentary greatness, but they prove only how much and how little even the best and greatest of men can do to raise a state whose citizens at large are not animated by his spirit. Lykomêdês does the same, on a smaller scale, for Arkadia; Philomêlos, in a less worthy cause, for Phôkis; while the Man of Macedon looks on, steadily waiting for the moment when internal discord shall at last place the prize within his grasp. So too in the later parallel. The Empire well nigh withdraws from the scene, and it had been well for the reputation of the Church if she had withdrawn also. Many Kings of the Romans were content to reign in Germany alone, and forsook Italy altogether. Some of the noblest, as Rudolf and Albert the Second, never even claimed the rite which should invest them with the rank of Emperor. Of those who did cross the Alps, Henry of Lüzelburg alone crossed them for any other purpose than to expose himself and his authority to contempt. The papacy sinks through three successive stages of degradation. The Babylonish captivity of Avignon removed the Roman Pontiff from his native seat, and changed the Vicegerent of Christ into the despised hireling of a French master. The Great Schism showed the world the spectacle of a spiritual sovereignty contested, like a temporal throne, between selfish and worthless disputants. At last the gap is healed, and Rome again receives her Pontiffs; but she receives them only that men might see the successors of Hildebrand and Innocent in the character of worldly and profligate Italian princes, bent only on the aggrandizement of their families or,

at best, on making good the pettiest temporal claims of the Holy See. Venice is following her schemes of crooked policy, only beginning to be redeemed by her nobler character as

'Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite.'

Milan, once the chosen home of freedom, is ground down beneath the vilest of tyrannies. Genoa, tossed by endless revolutions, is glad to throw herself into the arms of any despot who can ensure an hour of repose. Florence alone is left; but the noblest laurels of the Guelf city are now won in strife against a hostile Pontiff, and the eight Saints of the War are canonized by the voice of their country for withstanding the power to whose cause their fathers had been devoted. At last her hour comes; she sinks, gradually and well nigh willingly, under the gilded tyranny of citizens, Guelfs, and plebeians. Her ancient glories are past, her last dying glory is yet to come; but her degradation under Medicean rule might have moved her own poet to pity rather than to indignation. War is as endless, and it is yet more relentless than in earlier times, but it has lost its redeeming and ennobling features. Athens and Florence alike have ceased to be defended by the arms of their own citizens. Hireling banditti, without a cause and without a country, sell themselves to the highest bidder, and commonly prove a greater curse to those whom they profess to defend than to those against whom they are paid to wage warfare. Each land is speedily ripening for foreign bondage; each is ready to become the battle-field of foreign quarrels fought out upon her soil—quarrels which might now and then awaken a momentary interest, but which could never appeal to those high and ennobling feelings which were called forth by the warfare of an elder time.

What the struggles between the successors of Alexander were to Greece the wars of the early part of the sixteenth century were to Italy. The part of Polysperchôn, Kassandros, Dêmêtrios, and Antigonos was acted over again in all its fulness by Charles and Lewis and Ferdinand, and that Francis and that other Charles who have won for themselves a fame which has been unfairly denied to their victims.

During this period all traces of consistency, almost all traces of patriotism, are lost. The names of Guelf and Ghibelin indeed are still heard, but they now carry with them no more of meaning than the Shanavests and Caravats of a nearer field of discord. For the nobler feelings which they once embodied there could indeed be no room, now that every question was decided by the mere brute force of the stranger. The Macedonian plunderers could set forth no claim of right, not even the shallow blind of family or dynastic pretensions. Each competitor laid hands on whatever came in his way, and kept it till the law of the stronger adjudged the right to some more fortunate claimant. The subtler diplomacy of modern Europe helped the competitors in the later struggle to words and forms of legalized wickedness which their elder brethren might perchance have envied, perchance have honestly despised. When a French prince laid waste a province or slaughtered the garrison of a city, it was because his great-grandmother had drawn her first breath beneath its sky, and had handed on to him the right, thus strangely exercised, to be its lawful governor and protector. When Charles of Austria handed over city after city to a more ruthless and more lasting scourge, when for months and months every atrocity which earth or hell could devise was dealt out to the wretched people of Rome and Milan, it was all in support of the just rights of their King and Emperor; the majesty of Cæsar could not allow that claims should be any longer trampled on which, in most cases, had slept since the days of the Hohenstaufen. But even such pretexts as these were wanting to the insatiable and perfidious ambition of that Cæsar's grandfather. Kassandros or Ptolemy Keraunos could hardly have devised a more unprovoked and flagrant wrong than when the Catholic King parted out by treaty with his Most Christian brother the territories of his own ally and kinsman of Naples; when he lulled to sleep the suspicions of his victim till the blow could be effectually struck; when he at last turned his arms against his partner in evil, and carried off the whole spoil, without even

a shadow of right, from him who could at least bring forward some worn-out genealogy to justify his share in the wrong. And it is with a feeling, in some sort, of yet deeper indignation that we see the lance of the free Switzer too often levelled in warfare hardly more righteous than that of Austrian, French, and Spanish tyrants. The boasted age of Francis the First and Leo the Tenth is to the lover of right and freedom simply an age of well nigh unmixed evil, of evil even more unmixed than the warfare of the Successors themselves. The wars of Italy afford no such relief as the earliest and best days of Dêmêtrios, when, before his head was turned by flattery and indulgence, he eagerly caught at the title of the chosen head of independent Greece. No province handed over to Spanish or Medicean rule underwent so mild a destiny as Egypt under the early Ptolemies, or even Macedonia under some of her better Kings. Both pictures show forth human nature in its darkest colours; selfishness, cruelty, and treachery stalk forth undisturbed in each; but it must be confessed that, as far as Kings and princes are concerned, the advantage is on the side of the earlier chamber of horrors. The upstart brigands of Macedonia do not, with all their crimes, show themselves in hues quite so dark as the chiefs of the Holy Roman Empire, as the Eldest Sons of the Church, as the leaders of that Castilian chivalry which boasted of overcoming the Moslem at home and the idolater beyond the Ocean.

But in both pictures, among all the crimes of foreign oppressors, a gleam of native virtue shines forth. In Italy it sheds a ray of light over the darkest gloom of bondage; in Greece it is like a short polar day between her first and her last night of overthrow. Florence, so long the nearest parallel to Athens, holds, in her latest days, a place which rather answers to that of the Achaian League. The last time of freedom at Florence came in the darkest days of Italy; it even had its birth in the greatest of national misfortunes. The invasion of Charles the Eighth led to the first, the sack of Rome to the second, driving out of the Medici. During the

first short interval, she enjoyed a truer freedom and more of domestic peace than she had known in the proudest days of her former greatness; during the second, she defied the power of Pope and Emperor, who forgot their quarrels to destroy a freedom hateful to both alike. She fell only when a single city, without an ally at home or abroad, could no longer stand, in the mere strength of truth and right, against the spiritual thunders of the Pontiff and the secular arm of the mightiest potentate in Europe. Achaia ran a longer course, but she ended by a less noble fate. The better days of Aratos wrought more of lasting good than the gonfaloniership of Soderini; but the devotion of 'lily to lily,' unreasonable and unrequited as it was, never betrayed Florence into such deeds of treason as disgraced his later years. Florence never swerved: but the deliverer of Sikyôn and Corinth undid his own work; he betrayed Greece to the Macedonian whom he had driven out, because a worthier than himself had arisen to contest her championship with him. If Italy gave birth to no Agis and no Kleomenês, the fame of her last bulwark is not tarnished by a surrender of Corinth or by a victory of Sellasia. Florence fell at once and gloriously, the last blow in the general overthrow of Italy; Achaia stooped to drag on a feeble and lingering life under the degrading patronage of Macedonia and Rome. The course of both lands seemed to have been run; one indeed lived on, led captive her conquerors, and ruled in their name for a thousand years. The cannon and the scimitar of Mahomet at last wrought a conquest more thorough than the pilum and broadsword of Mummius. A yoke which could not be lightened has since been rent asunder: the very soil of Marathôn and Thermopylai has again been dyed with the blood of vanquished Barbarians; Mesolongi has outdone the fame of Eira and Plataia; and Greece, amid cruel difficulties and more cruel calumnies, has again taken her place among the nations. Must we deem that the last struggle of the sister peninsula has been made in vain? that the elder two-headed bird of prey must tear at his will the entrails of Milan and of

Venice, and his younger single-headed brother gorge himself for ever with the blood of Rome? Will force for ever trample upon right? or must we deem that there is something in the yoke of Habsburg even more grinding, deadening, and corrupting than in that of the barbarian infidel himself? *

An incidental reference in the last paragraph may suggest a third form of our comparison, but one which it is even less safe to press into minute particulars than either of the others. This is the analogy between the position and destinies of particular cities. Florence, the great democracy of Italy, bears undoubtedly a general analogy to Athens, the great democracy of Greece. From the thirteenth century onward, we can hardly help looking at Italian affairs from a Florentine, just as we look at Greek affairs from an Athenian point of view. The oligarchy of Sparta may suggest a fainter likeness to the oligarchy of Venice. Sismondi likens the momentary greatness of Lucca under Castruccio to the momentary greatness of Thebes under Epameinôndas. A still fainter likeness may suggest itself in the position, among a system of neighbouring commonwealths, of the monarchy of Macedonia and the monarchy of Naples. † But in this part of our sub-

* [The vehemence with which I wrote fifteen years ago seems almost amusing when we think how utterly the state of things which called it forth has passed away. Of the two birds of prey one has ceased to be a bird of prey, the other has had his claws cut at least for a season. But the mention of the two-headed eagle leads to the remark that it would be well if the Hungarian King and Austrian Archduke, would give up an ensign to which he has no kind of right, and which constantly leads people astray. Many people fancy that the two-headed eagle, and not the lion, is the bearing of Austria, and thence they are led to go on to cry out 'Austria' whenever they see a two-headed eagle. At the same time it must be remembered that the two heads of the Imperial bird were a comparatively modern innovation.]

† The states of Savoy would be a closer parallel, both in their geographical position and in their only half Italian character. The Burgundian Count has moved downwards upon Lombardy and Genoa, much as the Macedonian moved down upon Amphipolis and Thessaly. But, unlike the Macedonian, he has left the greater part of his older dominions behind him. But Savoy was of so little account in Italy during Italy's best days that it is hardly needful to enter on the comparison.

[This was how matters struck me when the Duke of Savoy and Prince of

ject especially, the comparison will be found more instructive in points of difference than in points of agreement. Macedonia was a state at least half Barbarian, though it was ruled by Hellenic Kings; Naples was an Italian land whose Kings were, by descent at least, Barbarians. Epameinôndas was the leader of a free democracy; Castruccio was a Tyrant, though a Tyrant undoubtedly of the nobler sort. The oligarchy of Sparta was born from the intrusion of a conquering race: the oligarchy of Venice gradually arose out of a people who had started on equal terms for a common stock. Sparta was great while she abode on the mainland: she failed when she attempted distant and maritime conquest. Venice was essentially maritime and colonizing, and she never erred so deeply as when she set up for a continental power. But some of the points of the two great oligarchic constitutions may be profitably compared. The analogy between the Spartan King and the Venetian Doge is striking indeed. Our first impulse is to underrate the importance of both princes in their respective commonwealths. We are led to compare the Duke of Venice with the Duke of Milan, to compare the King of the Lacedæmonians with the King of Macedon, or even with the Great King himself. A prince fettered by countless restrictions, a prince liable to deposition, fine, exile, or even death, seems to be no prince at all. He sinks below the level of a Florentine Prior, almost down to that of an Athenian Archôn. Looked at as princes, the Spartan King and the Venetian Doge may indeed seem contemptible; but, looked at as republican magistrates, they filled a more commanding position than any other republican magistrates in Greece or Italy. No Greek save a Spartan Hêrakleid was born to the permanent command of his country's armies; no other was born to a place in her Senate which needed no popular renewal and could be forfeited only by treason against the state. No Italian citizen save the Venetian Duke

Piedmont reigned on both sides of the Alps. The process by which the House of Savoy has, ever since the sixteenth century, gone on losing Burgundian and gaining Italian territory has since been carried out in all its fulness.]

was chosen to a position which clothed him for life at once with an honorary precedence, and with an important voice, if nothing more, in the direction of public affairs. The legal authority of the King and the Doge was most narrowly limited, but his opportunities of gaining influence were unrivalled. Holding a permanent position, while other magistrates were changed around him, a King or Doge of any ability could win for himself a personal authority far beyond any which belonged to his office. He could not indeed command, but he could always advise, and his advice was very often followed. We find therefore that the personal character of Kings and Doges was by no means so unimportant as the narrow range of their legal powers might at first lead us to think. A vigorous prince, an Agêsilaos or a Francesco Foscari, might, during the course of a long reign, gain an influence over the counsels of the republic which was not within the reach of any other citizen, and which made him virtually, as well as in name, the sovereign of his country.

Enough has perhaps been said to show that between the general position and the general course of events in ancient Greece and in mediæval Italy the parallel is as near as any historical parallel is ever likely to be. It only remains to make the likeness still nearer by pointing out the special diversities which it is easy to see between the two.

Nearly all of these diversities spring from the same source. In Greece everything was fresh and original, while the condition of mediæval Italy was essentially based upon an earlier state of things. Greece was the first country which reached anything worthy of the name of civilization, if by that word we understand, not the pomp and luxury of kingly or priestly despots, but the real cultivation of man's intellectual and political powers. The history of Greece springs out of a mythical chaos, out of which we can at least learn thus much, that all that made the greatness of the nation was strictly of native birth. No earlier or foreign system underlies the historical civilization of Hellas: what is not

strictly immemorial is no less strictly self-developed. No one capable of any historical criticism will now put faith in those tales of Barbarian settlements in Greece of which Homer at least had never heard. No one possessed of any æsthetic perception will derive the glorious forms of Doric and Attic skill from the heavy columns and lifeless idols reared by the adorers of apes and onions. The pure mythology of the Iliad is indeed akin to the splendid fictions of Hindostan or Scandinavia, but no one who has a heart to feel or a mind to understand will trace it to the follies of Egyptian or to the abominations of Semitic idolatry. But in mediæval Italy nothing is strictly original; politics, religion, literature, and art are all developements or reproductions of something which had existed in earlier times. Others laboured, and she entered into their labours; she succeeded to the good and the evil of two, we might perhaps say of three, earlier systems. Her political institutions rose out of the feudalism which had overshadowed the Roman Empire, just as the Roman Empire had itself arisen from the gradual fusion of the independent states of primæval Italy. The Greek system was the first of its class; that of mediæval Italy was in some sort a return to that of times before Roman supremacy began. It carries us back to the days when twelve cities of Etruria gathered under the banner of Lars Porsena, and thirty cities of Latium under the banner of the Tusculan Mamilius, to humble the upstart asylum of shepherds and bandits which had encroached upon their immemorial dignity. Even in this primæval Italy town-autonomy was far less perfectly developed than in contemporary Greece; in mediæval Italy we see only its revival, and a revival modified by the events of fifteen intervening centuries.

The grand distinguishing feature between the two systems is that over the whole period of Italian freedom there still hung the great, though shadowy, conception of the Roman Empire.* To this there is nothing analogous in the Hel-

* [All this has since been worked out more fully both in Mr. Bryce's Essay and in my own remarks on it in my former series. But I leave the passage

lenic prototype. The sovereign independence of the Grecian cities is strictly immemorial. No time can be pointed out when every town did not at least pretend, though power might often fail to support the pretension, to a distinct political being. The several cities arise out of the mythical darkness in the shape of sovereign states, each governed by its independent King, soon to be exchanged for its independent commonwealth. The dynasty represented by the names of Atreus and Agamemnôn probably exercised a kind of suzerainty over the whole of Peloponnêsos; but this seems to have been a mere passing domination; everything tells against the notion of the separate Grecian commonwealths being fragments of an earlier Grecian empire. But in the mediæval parallel the case is conspicuously reversed. The separate Italian commonwealths were essentially fragments of an earlier Italian empire. The republics of Lombardy and Tuscany were members of the Roman Empire and of the Kingdom of Italy, which had gradually grown from simple municipalities into sovereign commonwealths. Their liberties were won by local struggles against the petty lord of each several district; they were confirmed by a common struggle against the Roman Emperor himself. Sismondi likens Frederick Barbarossa to Xerxês.* One is half inclined to be angry at seeing one of the noblest of men placed side by side with one of the most contemptible; but, had the comparison lain between Cyrus and Wenceslaus, there is the all-important difference that, while the Persian was simply extending his empire, the German was striving to win back rights which his predecessors had held, and of which he deemed himself to be unjustly deprived. The old Imperial ideas never lost their general hold upon men's minds, and new circumstances were continually happening to clothe them with new prominence. Strange as it may seem, it

pretty much as I first wrote it, to show how things had struck me before Mr. Bryce's Essay appeared.]

* 'Le redoubtable Xerxès du moyen âge,' vol. ii. p. 8. See above, the remarks in p. 19, note.

was assumed as an axiom not to be gainsayed that the prince who styled himself Emperor of the Romans, however alien from Rome and Italy in blood and policy and language, was still the lawful successor of Augustus and Constantine. A thousand years of history will always be misunderstood, unless we bear in mind that, throughout the early middle age, the Roman Empire was not merely acknowledged as an existing fact, but was believed in as something grounded on the eternal fitness of things. We are tempted to overlook the importance of this belief as a fact, because to us it seems so unreasonable as a principle. In theory the Roman Empire never became extinct, though its sovereignty was handed on from race to race, though its seat of government wandered from city to city. Up to 476, Italy still kept her resident Emperors of her own blood. From 476 to 800 the Old Rome stooped to acknowledge the authority, sometimes nominal, sometimes real, of the masters of the New. In 800 she again set forth her prescriptive rights, and chose the Frank Charles, not as the restorer of a power which had passed away, but as the lawful successor of Constantine the Sixth in opposition to his usurping mother.* From that moment we have again two distinct, and now two rival, lines of princes, each alike foreign to Rome and Italy, but each claiming to be no longer a mere colleague in a divided government, but the true and only representative of the undivided monarchy, the one lawful Emperor of the Romans. For nearly three centuries after the coronation of Charles, the German Cæsar of the West was at least the nominal sovereign of Northern Italy, while the Greek Cæsar of the East retained a far more practical possession of a large portion of its southern provinces. The power of the Byzantine Emperors in Italy was at last rooted out by the Norman settlers; but circumstances continually arose to

* It is curious to see how quietly this is assumed in those of the old chronicles, which, like that of Radulfus Niger, follow the order of the Imperial reigns. 'Leo, Constantinus, Carolus, Ludovicus,' follow in the most peaceable succession.

invest their Teutonic rivals with both a moral and a material authority over Lombardy, Tuscany, and Rome itself. From Saxon Otto to Austrian Charles, the dignity which the East reverenced so long in her unbroken succession of Emperors, was acknowledged by the West as belonging to every German prince who could win for himself the Papal benediction. The iron crown of Monza made him, as King of Italy, the feudal superior of every Lombard and Tuscan state; the golden diadem of Rome clothed him, as Cæsar and Augustus, with higher and vaguer claims well nigh co-extensive with the sovereignty of the world. One age revives the study of the Civil Law; and its professors at once invest the Frankish or Swabian overlord with all the rights and powers of the old Roman despotism. Another age beholds the ancient poets again assert their supremacy, and all that Virgil and Horace had sung of the Julian house is at once transferred to sovereigns of whose native tribes Germanicus himself had hardly heard. Albert of Habsburg is reproached by Dante for forsaking the garden of his Empire, and the Eternal City is earnestly bidden to be no longer stepdame unto Cæsar. Henry of Lüzelburg came down from the Alps amid the applause of Italy. Poets, orators, and civilians alike pressed to welcome the barbarian chief of a petty northern principality, claiming the lawful jurisdiction over Rome and Italy, with the sword of Germany in the one hand and the books of Justinian in the other. Both cities and Tyrants were always found to support the Imperial claims in their fulness; the stoutest Guelf of Florence would hardly have denied the abstract theory that some superiority over his commonwealth belonged to Cæsar Augustus, however narrow might be the bounds within which he would confine his practical authority. If a large proportion of the ancient kingdom formally disowned the supremacy of the Emperor, it was because the Imperial rights were held to have been handed over to another lord. Ferrara, Bologna, and Perugia acknowledged no superiority in the Roman Emperor; but it was only because they looked up to a temporal as well as a

spiritual master in the Roman Pontiff. Throughout the middle ages, no one dreamed that full and absolute sovereignty belonged to any Italian city. The notion of an Italian kingdom perhaps hardly outlived the Hohenstaufen; but the vaguer claims of the Empire, the more practical claims of the Popedom, still lived on within their respective boundaries. Every prince, every commonwealth, held either of the Pope or the Emperor as superior lord. The authority of either lord was often but nominal; but the bare existence of such never-forgotten claims at once distinguishes the princes who asserted them from mere foreign invaders like Xerxês at Thermopylæ or Mahomet at Constantinople. The Imperial rights, even when anything like government was out of the question, could often be successfully used as a means of extorting money; when they were at last backed by the might of Castile and Burgundy, they laid Italy as prostrate as she had ever lain before Belisarius, Charles, or Otto. In like manner, the feudal claims of the Papacy could be successfully asserted after centuries of abeyance. Thus Bologna lost her republic and her demagogues, Urbino lost her magnificent Dukes, in the common wilderness of ecclesiastical misgovernment. Venice alone, strong in her lagoons and her islands, contrived to escape the pretensions both of the spiritual and the temporal master. She escaped all prescriptive right in the Western Cæsar by preserving, as long as prudence bade her, her nominal allegiance to his Byzantine rival. She destroyed all traditionary authority in the master of the East by the still more practical process of overturning his throne and partitioning his Empire. In the ninth century, she drove back the Frankish King of Italy, by asserting the lawful claims of the true Cæsar by the Bosporos. Four centuries later, she could divide that Cæsar's realm and capital with fellow-robbers of the same Frankish blood.* Her style and title had

* [It would seem that when I wrote this sentence I had not fully learned to distinguish between *Franks* and *Frenchmen*. The Latin conquerors of Constantinople are rightly called *Franks* in the sense which that word bears throughout the East, and the chances are that many of the leaders of the

strangely altered in the interval. 'The slaves of the Emperor of the Romans could now invest their Doges with that arithmetical title, so worthy of a merchant prince, 'Lord of one fourth and one eighth of the Empire of Romania.'

The independence of the Greek cities was thus strictly immemorial, while that of their Italian antitypes arose from the bosom of an earlier feudal* monarchy. From this it almost necessarily follows that in Greece the cities were everything, while in Italy they indeed became predominant, but could never wholly wipe out all traces of the earlier state of things. In proper Greece there was no spot of ground which did not belong to some city. That city might be democratically, aristocratically, or tyranically governed; it might even be in bondage to some stronger city; but there was no such thing as an independent chief who had nothing to do with the organized government of any acknowledged city-commonwealth. But in Italy feudalism had existed, and was never wholly rooted out. Not only did there exist in its southern portion a powerful kingdom which remained unconnected with the Western Empire; within the Kingdom of Italy itself the territory of the towns never took in the whole country. The liberties of each city were won from the feudal chief of its own district. When those liberties were established within, the city usually grew to be dominant without; the neighbouring feudal lords were brought under its authority, and were often changed into a civic nobility within the town. But this process was never carried out through the whole extent of the kingdom. In its north-western portion powerful feudal princes went on reigning over Piedmont,

Fourth Crusade would, as a matter of genealogy, really be of Frankish blood. Still the expression is a misleading one. When we speak of 'Gesta Dei per Francos,' we use the word *Francus* in its later and not in its earlier sense; in the sense in which *Francus* and *Francigena* are used in Domesday—the sense of persons using the French language, whether subjects or vassals to the King of the French or not.]

* [The word 'feudal' is 'patient' of a correct meaning; I therefore leave it; but every one should be on his guard against believing that any such thing as a 'feudal system' ever existed anywhere.]

Montferrat, and Saluzzo; even elsewhere feudal chieftains of less dignity maintained their wild independence in many mountain holds. In short, the brood of petty rulers, holding nominally of the Emperor, and neither citizens nor Tyrants of any city, was for the most part driven into inaccessible holes and corners, but it was never wholly rooted out.

The feudal origin of the Italian aristocracies brought with it another important difference between them and those of Greece. A Grecian aristocracy was often a body of invaders who had settled in a conquered city, and who handed on exclusive political rights to their descendants. Sometimes a privileged class arose by a gradual process from among the body of their fellow-citizens. And this last process has been at work in later times also; to it was owing the closest and most unscrupulous, and at the same time the most orderly and sagacious of all such bodies, the long-lived oligarchy of Venice. A somewhat intermediate process produced the less brilliant, but far more righteous and hardly less prudent aristocracy of Bern. A city which contained a large patrician element from its first foundation enlarged its territory by repeated conquests and purchases, till the civic oligarchy found itself changed into the corporate despot of an extensive dominion. Hence the Grecian, and in after-times the Venetian and Bernese, oligarchies acted strictly as an oligarchic class, bound together by a common spirit and interest. But in most Italian cities the half-tamed feudal lords were gathered into the town not a little against their will. They therefore naturally kept on within the walls much of the 'isolation and lawlessness' of the old life which they had led in the mountains. The Venetian noble might boast of his palace, but in most Italian cities the patrician mansion was not a palace, but a fortress, fitted and accustomed to defend itself alike against rival nobles and against the power of the commonwealth itself. This state of things was unheard of in Greece. No such licence was allowed to any citizen or any King of Sparta; nor can we imagine anything like it in aristocratic Chios or Corinth. Even in democratic Athens

wealth and birth assumed a strange practical licence. Meidias indulged himself in the practice of assault and battery;* but it was only the corporate ὕβρις of the Four Hundred which was followed by a band of armed retainers. Alkibiadês was lord of a private castle;† but it stood on the shores of the Chersonêsos, not within the walls of Athens; even the house in which he held the unwilling Agatharchos could hardly have been ready to stand a siege against the united power of the Ten Generals.

Another difference between a Greek and an Italian commonwealth is to be found in the origin of the commonwealths themselves. As the Italian republics were municipalities which had gradually grown into sovereign states, they naturally kept on much of the mercantile constitution of the old *communes*. A Grecian city had indeed its smaller political divisions. It was either artificially partitioned into local wards or districts, or sometimes the city itself was formed by the union of earlier villages which still survived as wards or districts of the city. But commercial guilds, if they existed at all in Greece, were nowhere of any political importance. In many Italian cities they were the very soul of the constitution. The Athenian acted directly as a citizen of the commonwealth; the Florentine acted only indirectly as a member of some incorporated trade.

From all these causes working together it followed that the true republican spirit was very weak in mediæval Italy, as compared with its full growth in ancient Greece. The natural tendency of a commonwealth is to vest all authority, as far as may be, in some Senate or Assembly, meeting often and constantly looking into public affairs. The constitution of such Assembly of course depends upon the aristocratic or democratic constitution of the commonwealth. But in either case, each

* [I almost suspect that this strange insolence of individual men of which Meidias and Alkibiadês were examples is more likely to be found in a democracy than in an oligarchy. In an oligarchy, members of the privileged order at least will be safe from it. And a wise and legal oligarchy will have the sense for its own interest to protect the non-privileged classes also.]

† Τὰ ἑαυτοῦ τείχη. Xen. Hell. i. 5, 17; cf. ii. 1, 25.

citizen who is possessed of the fullest franchise deems himself entitled to a direct voice in all important affairs. Even Sparta, oligarchy within oligarchy as she was, notwithstanding the lofty position of her Kings and Gerontes and the more practical authority of her Ephors, did not, like constitutional England, entrust questions of war and peace to Ministers acting in the dark, but had them freely debated in the General Assembly of the privileged order. The highest developement of this tendency is of course to be found in the Public Assembly of Athens. Dêmos made himself an absolute monarch, and cut down all magistrates to the position of mere executors of his decrees. The Archôns had once been sovereign, but their powers were gradually cut down to a peaceful routine of police and religious ceremonial, which carried with it no political influence whatever. The Generals indeed acted as Foreign Secretaries, but they confined themselves to the functions of Secretaries; they could not irrevocably commit the commonwealth to a policy for which the Assembly could only censure them after the fact. But in the most democratic states of mediæval Italy, even in Florence herself, a constantly superintending popular Assembly was altogether unknown, or appeared only in her latest day. At the very utmost, the assembled people were only called together now and then, to declare peace or war or to agree to some important constitutional change. At Florence, for a long time, they only assembled when the purposes of faction called for the gathering of a tumultuous Parliament, whose first act commonly was to vote away its own liberties. The old commonwealth had indeed its Councils, but a real Assembly, entitled in any way to speak in the name of the people, arose only in the revived commonwealth under the gonfaloniership of Soderini. To individual magistrates it was everywhere usual, and indeed it often was necessary, to entrust a power over the lives and liberties of the citizens at which an Athenian would have stood aghast. And no wonder, when it was perhaps less often their business to preside at a peaceful tribunal than to march at the head of the armed people to put down some

rebellious noble who stood out in utter defiance of all legal authority. Hence the excessive shortness of the terms for which magistrates were elected: no man could be trusted to wield such tremendous powers for more than the shortest possible time. But hence too the fluctuations and confusions of a commonwealth which changed its rulers six times in every year. Hence again an Italian commonwealth afforded very little of that political education of the entire people which was the noblest result of the Athenian democracy. The citizen of Athens had his wits sharpened by the constant practice of 'ruling and judging.' The Florentine could at most look forward to enjoy, some day or other, a two months' share in the exercise of a despotic power to which during the rest of his life he must bow down. The ordinary Athenian was necessarily a judge and a statesman; the ordinary Florentine had hardly the opportunity of so much political education as the Englishman may contrive to pick up in the jury-box, the parish vestry, * or the quarter-sessions.

From this comparative weakness of the republican spirit it could not fail to follow that the foundation of tyrannies was more easy in mediæval Italy than it ever was in Greece. It followed also that they became more lasting and, in outward show at least, more lawful. Civil liberty, as Sismondi has drawn out, was but little known or valued even in the republican states. The wishes of the people were satisfied if rulers were popularly chosen or drawn, and if they kept their office only for a short term. While their power lasted, it hardly differed in extent from that of any permanent despotism not of the most outrageous kind. It followed that the change from a republic to a tyranny was, in its beginnings at least, less violent than in Greece. Moreover, the first generation of each dynasty of Tyrants were almost always men of ability; they were not always quite devoid of virtue;

* [For the Parish Vestry I should perhaps now say the Board of Guardians, the Highway Board, the School Board, perhaps the County Financial Board of the future.]

they were men who had at least been brought up as citizens and had not been born in the purple. The saying that

'Nemo repente fuit turpissimus'

seems to apply to families as well as to individuals. It was not till after several generations of sovereignty that the viper of the Visconti began to hatch the monstrous brood of Bernabos and Gian-Marias. In many Italian cities, the mass of the people were so used to aristocratic insolence, they were so cut off from all real share in the government, that the establishment of a despot might easily look to them like the coming of a deliverer. At any rate it might look like the coming of one oppressor instead of many. The high magistracies were often practically confined to a few distinguished families, even where technical nobility was no longer needed. It was to them alone that the change would involve any great political loss; and the less exalted spirits among them would easily find compensation in the honours and flatteries of a court. It is true that, in nearly every case, the people came to rue their error. The most imperfect form of law, the most turbulent form of freedom, was found to be better than deadening submission to a single despotic will. The Tyrant too commonly deserved his name in the popular as well as in the technical sense; Malatestas were more common than Montefeltros; Francesco Sforza left his coronet to Galeazzo-Maria. But, at the moment of change, the setting up of a tyranny was far less offensive to Italian than it had been to Grecian feelings. The government of a single person was far less strange to the Italian mind. To the Greek monarchical power in any shape seemed to be one of the characteristics which distinguished the Barbarian from himself. But Italy was familiar with monarchs of every size and degree. The existence of feudal princes side by side with the commonwealths, the feudal notions kept up by many of the nobles within the cities, the acknowledged overlordship of the Emperors, all joined together to give an impulse to monarchical government in Italy. The position too both of the Pope and of the Emperor afforded a means of bestowing an outward legitimacy on those who became possessed of sovereign power. The means were indeed not quite so easy

as they have become in later times. In our days nothing is simpler than the change of an elective President into a hereditary Emperor. It may be done with equal success on either side of the Atlantic; the skin of the son of fortune may be indifferently white or black; it matters not whether the work is done by simple violence or with some outward show of legality. In either case might makes right, and the crown covers all defects. In old Greece and Italy the art of a Soulouques and a Buonaparte appeared only in a much ruder form.* Neither in Greece nor in Italy did the God or the saint whom he had sworn by always keep back an ambitious leader from the luxury of a *coup d'etat*. But the Greek was commonly high-minded enough to despise the mere gewgaws of kingship, and even the Italian was modest enough to abstain from the highest of earthly titles. Rumour said that Gian-Galeazzo had a royal crown in his treasure-house designed for his own brow; but respect for his feudal superior hindered him from forestalling the lofty style of their Cæsarean majesties of France and Hayti. Old Greece was far behind the march of modern improvement; she drew a distinction between τύραννος and βασιλεύς which our age seems to have forgotten, and she afforded no means, violent or legal, of converting one into the other. Italian politics equally drew the perfectly analogous distinction between the hereditary prince of a feudal lordship and the Tyrant who arose in a civic republic.† But the Italian Tyrant, far as he lagged behind more recent professors, at least possessed means of changing his title which were denied to his Grecian forerunners. The partizan chief who, half by force, half by election, became 'Lord' or 'Tyrant' of an Italian commonwealth, was himself not unfrequently the hereditary feudal prince of some smaller territory, and the distinct sources of his authority over the two states

* [Soulouques and Buonapartes are now happily swept away from the list of rulers. But the loathsome flattery with which the fallen Tyrant has been greeted in this country shows something very wrong in the moral feelings of the age, and makes one fear that Soulouques and Buonapartes may not have passed away for ever.]

† The *indifferent* term 'signore,' exactly translates the indifferent term δυνάστης.

might easily come to be confounded. Thus the Marquesses of Este became Lords of Modena and Ferrara, and they were often spoken of as Marquesses of the latter city before they had gained any formal right to the title. In any case, the position of a feudal prince, independent in fact, though nominally holding of a superior lord, was one perfectly familiar both to the ruler and to his subjects, and it was one to which an easy process could raise him. It only needed the outlay of some small part of what he levied on his countrymen to buy from the Pope or the Emperor a diploma changing the fallen commonwealth into a duchy or marquisate to be held by himself and his heirs for ever. Such a document at once changed, legally at least, his usurped and precarious power into an acknowledged and lawful sovereignty, handed on according to a definite law of succession, and subject to all the accidents of a feudal lordship. But such a process often carried with it the seeds of its own destruction. When Gian-Galeazzo bought the investiture of a Duke of the Empire from the careless Wenceslaus, he paved the way for all the wars which devastated his duchy, and for the final loss of its independence. When Borso of Este became a Papal vassal for his new Duchy of Ferrara, he took the first step towards its ultimate absorption into the immediate domain of the Roman See.

This phænomenon of Tyrants is one which seems to be peculiar to Greece and Italy among the various systems of town-autonomy. In Switzerland and the Netherlands, a demagogue * now and then won an influence which practically made him the temporary sovereign of his own city. But no such demagogue ever founded a permanent tyranny; much less did he ever change his position into an acknowledged sovereignty. Again, between Greece and Italy we may discern some chronological differences. In the Greek colonies the Tyrant was a phænomenon to be found in all ages, and his position seems to have differed less than elsewhere from lawful kingship. Not only the laureate

* [I do not use the word contemptuously: δημαγωγός—a name given to Periklês himself—is surely the highest title that man can bear.]

Pindar, but Herodotus himself does not scruple to apply the title of *βασιλεύς* to various Sicilian and Italian rulers.* In the Macedonian times, when Greece had become familiar with kingship, the title was of course more freely assumed. But in Greece itself tyranny was a phænomenon confined almost wholly to two periods. There were the demagogue-Tyrants of the early days of the republics, partizan chiefs who commonly ruled with the good-will of at least a portion of the people. There were the military Tyrants of a later time, who ruled by sheer violence at the head of bands of mercenaries, and who were practically mere

* [On looking more narrowly into this matter, I doubt whether Herodotus, speaking in his own person, ever does give the title of *βασιλεύς* to any one who was strictly *τύραννος*. I add an extract from an Essay of mine which deals too much with details to be reprinted in full. ('Herodotus and his Commentators,' National Review, October 1862, p. 300.)

'Nothing is more clearly marked in Greek political languages than the difference between King and Tyrant, *βασιλεύς* and *τύραννος*. The *βασιλεύς*, we need hardly say, is the lawful King, the hereditary or elective prince of a state whose constitution is monarchic. It is applicable alike to a good King and to a bad one, to the despotic empire of Persia and to the almost nominal royalty of Lacedæmon; but it always implies that kingship is the recognized government of the country. The *τύραννος*, on the other hand, is the ruler who obtains kingly power in a republic, and whose government therefore, whether good or bad in itself, is unlawful in its origin. In the same way it is applicable to the lawful King who seizes on a degree of power which the law does not give him; it is therefore applied, by their respective enemies, to Pheidôn of Argos and to the last Kleomenês of Sparta. It is clear then that *βασιλεύς* is a title of respect, while *τύραννος* implies more or less of contempt or hatred. The Tyrant would wish to be called *βασιλεύς*, and would be so called by his flatterers, but by nobody else. But in republican language, especially in days when lawful Kings hardly existed in Greece itself, lawful kingship might often be spoken of as tyranny. Now all these distinctions are carefully attended to by Herodotus; to translate the words *βασιλεύς* and *τύραννος* as if Herodotus used them indiscriminately is utterly to misrepresent the author. Herodotus clearly observes the distinction. He applies the word *βασιλεύς* to foreign Kings, and to the princes of those Greek states where royalty had never been abolished. He gives us Kings of Kyrênê, Kings of Cyprus, Kings of Sparta, a King of Thessaly,—meaning doubtless the Tagos (v. 63); but never, when speaking in his own person, does he give us Kings of Athens or Corinth. When therefore we find a King of Zanklê (vi. 2, 3) and a King of the Tarentines (iii. 136) we may fairly infer that at Zanklê and Tarentum kingly government had not gone out of use up to the time of Herodotus. The address *ὦ βασιλεύ*, at the beginning of the angry speech of the Athenian envoys (vii. 161), may well be sarcastic.']

Macedonian viceroys. Neither class were ever acknowledged as Kings, but the later class were still further from such acknowledgement than the earlier. Between the two periods comes the real republican period, from Kleisthenês to Dêmosthenês, during which Tyrants are but seldom heard of, and scarcely ever in the most illustrious cities. But in Italy, the phænomenon of tyranny did not begin at all till the republican spirit had begun to decay, and, as we have seen, it gradually changed into what was looked upon as legitimate sovereignty.

Lastly, as the Greek nation was the first which developed for itself anything worthy of the name of civilization, Greece and the Greek colonies naturally formed the whole extent of their own civilized world. Other nations were simply outside Barbarians. In the best days of Greece the interference of a foreign power in her internal quarrels would have seemed as if the sovereign of Morocco or China should claim the presidency of a modern European congress. In later times indeed Sparta and Thebes and Athens, each in turn, found it convenient to contract political alliances with the Great King at Ekbatana, or with their more dangerous neighbour at Pella. But the Mede always remained a purely external enemy or a purely external paymaster; the Macedonian had himself to become a Greek before his turn came to be the dominant power of Greece. But in mediæval Italy the case was widely different. She affected indeed to apply the name Barbarian to all nations beyond her mountain-bulwark. Nor did the assumption want some show of justification in her palpable pre-eminence in wealth, in refinement, in literature, in many branches of art, above all in political knowledge and progress. But, notwithstanding this, it was impossible to place mediæval Italy so far above contemporary France or Spain or Germany, as ancient Greece stood above the rest of her contemporary world. All the states of Western Christendom were fragments of a single Empire, whose laws and language and general civilization had left traces

among them all. A common religion too united them against the paynim of Cordova or Bagdad, too often against the schismatic who filled the throne of Constantine. Italy for ages saw the lawful successor of her Kings and Cæsars in a Barbarian of the race most alien to her feelings and language. Most of her highest nobility drew their origin from the same foreign stock. No wonder then if nations less alien to her tongue and manners played a part in her internal politics which differed widely from any interference of Barbarians in the affairs of Greece. Italian parties ranged themselves under the German watchwords of Guelf and Ghibelin, and fought under the standards of Angevin, Provençal, and Aragonese invaders. Florence looked to France—lily to lily—as her natural ally and her chosen protector. Sicily sought for her deliverer from French oppression in the rival power of a Spanish King. French and Spanish princes had been so often welcomed into Italy, they had so often filled Italian thrones and guided Italian politics, that men perhaps hardly understood the change or foresaw the consequences, when for the first time a King of France entered Italy in arms as the claimant of an Italian kingdom. Gradually, but only gradually, the strife which had once been a mere disputed succession between an Angevin and an Aragonese pretender grew into a strife between the mightiest potentates of the West for the mastery of Italy and of Europe.

The coronation of Charles the Fifth ends the history of independent Italy. It ends also the history of the Western Empire. No Roman Emperor ever again came down into Italy to claim the golden crown at the hands of the Roman Pontiff. Moreover, since the days of Justinian, no Roman Emperor had ever held the same unbounded sway through the whole length of the Italian peninsula. That sway he indeed handed on to his successors, not indeed to his successors in the shadowy majesty of the Empire, but to those who wielded the more real might of Spain and the

Indies. If in later times his power in Italy came back to German princes who still bore the Imperial title, it came back to them, not as chiefs of a Roman or even a German Empire, but as those who wielded the power of the hereditary states of the Austrian House. The real history alike of the Empire and of the commonwealths ends with the fall of Florence and the pageant of Bologna. The formal close of Italian independence may indeed be put off till the last conquest of Sienna some twenty years later. One Italian state indeed had yet to run a course of glory, but it was hardly in the character of an Italian state. Venice still continued her career as the withstander, sometimes the conqueror, of the infidel. Bragadino had yet to die in torments —the penalty of trusting to an Ottoman capitulation. The fruitless laurels of Lepanto were yet to be won, and Morosini had yet to drive out the Barbarian from the plains of Argos and the Akropolis of Corinth. Genoa still kept her republican forms, and for one moment she showed the true republican spirit. Her patrician rulers had sunk in slumber; but the people of the Proud City had still, hardly a century back, strength left for a rising which drove forth the Austrian from her gates. But as a whole, Italy was dead. We have ourselves seen her renewed struggles for life; we have again seen her crushed down under the yoke of the brother tyrants of Austria and France. For eight years she has crouched in voiceless and seemingly hopeless bondage. That she has fallen for ever we will not willingly believe. But in what form shall she rise again? Her town-autonomy can never be restored in an age of Emperors and standing armies. Yet no lover of Italy could bear to see Milan and Venice and Florence and the Eternal City itself sink into provincial dependencies of the Savoyard. The other and more fortunate home of freedom supplies the key. If right and freedom should ever win back their own, the course of Aratos and Washington, of Fürst and Stauffacher and Melchthal,* must be the guiding star of the liberators

* [I have since learned that the 'Three Men' are mythical; but the lesson of Swiss history is none the less useful.]

of Italy. The union which she failed to work in the twelfth century the bitter experience of ages may lead her to work in these later times. We cannot indeed look to see Italy, any more than Greece, become once more the central point of European history; but it may not be too wild a dream, if only foreign intermeddlers will stand aloof, to hope that an Italian Confederation may yet hold an independent and honourable place in the general system of Europe. *

* [I leave this as I wrote it. The question of an Italian Confederation has now become as purely a matter of history as the question of a Bœotian Confederation. Italy has chosen her own form of government; that form of government every Italian is bound loyally to accept, and every lover of Italy is bound to wish it well. Nor can I wonder that the name of a Confederation became hateful in Italy after Buonaparte had put forth the insidious scheme of an Italian Confederation as one of his devices for hindering Italian unity and freedom. The proposal of the sham Confederation was quite enough to hinder the establishment of a real one. Yet I may be allowed to doubt whether Italy has not been somewhat hasty in her choice, and whether something of a Federal form would not have been better for a constitution which was to take in lands differing so widely from one another in their social state and in their historical associations as do some of the provinces of the present Italian Kingdom.]

## II.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S HOMER AND THE HOMERIC AGE.*

*Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age.* By the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, D.C.L., M.P. for the University of Oxford. 3 vols. Oxford, 1858.

These three volumes of Mr. Gladstone's form a great, but a very unequal work. They would be a worthy fruit of a life spent in learned retirement. As the work of one of our first orators and statesmen, they are altogether wonderful. Not indeed that Mr. Gladstone's two characters of scholar and statesman have done aught but help and strengthen one another. His long experience of the world has taught him the better to appreciate Homer's wonderful knowledge of human nature; the practical aspect of his poems, the deep moral and political lessons which they teach, become a far more true and living thing to the man of busy life than they can ever be to the mere solitary student. And perhaps his familiarity with the purest and most ennobling source of inspiration may have had some effect in adorning

* [I have left this Essay substantially as it was first written. I have made some verbal improvements, and I have left out some passages which had lost their point through lapse of time, but I have not altered any actual expressions of opinion. I should now perhaps write a little less enthusiastically on one or two points than I did then, but I have seen no reason to change the general views which I held then. I still believe that we have in the Iliad and Odyssey, the genuine works—allowing of course for a certain amount of interpolation—of a real personal Homer. There are of course difficulties about such a belief, but the difficulties the other way seem to me to be greater. The theory of Mr. Paley, the most unbelieving of all, I hope some day to have an opportunity of examining in detail.]

Mr. Gladstone's political oratory with more than one of its noblest features. He is not unlike the Achilleus of his own story. He may at least say with equal right,

> *ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος, ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλῃσιν,*
> *ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσὶν, ἄλλο δὲ βάζει.*

What strikes one more than anything else throughout Mr. Gladstone's volumes is the intense earnestness, the loftiness of moral purpose, which breathes in every page. He has not taken up Homer as a plaything, nor even as a mere literary enjoyment. To him the study of the Prince of Poets is clearly a means by which himself and other men may be made wiser and better. Here lies an immeasureable distance between him and a purely literary critic like Colonel Mure. Indeed Mr. Gladstone's morality, pure and noble as it is, is, we think, somewhat overwrought. It sometimes sinks into asceticism, sometimes into over-scrupulousness. So, in the more purely intellectual portions of his inquiry, we can easily see that same over-subtlety with which his censors reproach him in his speeches. Everywhere minute, everywhere ingenious, he often attempts to prove too much, and to find meanings in Homer of which Homer certainly never dreamed. In short, every one of the noblest qualities which adorn, every one of the defects which mar, the political portraiture of the most earnest and eloquent of living statesmen, is to be found transferred in all its fullness to the Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age.

In one point at least of his subject, and that the greatest of all, Mr. Gladstone certainly stands unrivalled. In his pages Homer has, for the first time for many ages, had full justice done to him. This saying may seem strange, after Homer has so long been alike the text-book of school-boys and the delight of riper scholars; but it is true, after all, that Mr. Gladstone has been the first to teach us to admire Homer as we ought. He claims for him, and that most justly, a place differing, not only in degree but in kind, from all who have come after him. He is the first of poets, to whom Dante

and Shakespere alone could ever be seriously compared; and he is set above Dante and Shakespere by the fact of his being the first in time, with every thought native and unborrowed. Homer is moreover not only a poet, but, indirectly at least, he is a historian, a moralist, and a divine; he is our sole witness to the events, the manners, and the creed of Greece in her heroic age. Yet, as Mr. Gladstone truly complains, for ages past men have not learned to draw the proper line between him and all who came after him. They have not even learned to come to the fountain-head, and to quaff for themselves at the true well of inspiration. Men's ideas of the Homeric age are largely drawn, not from Homer himself, but from modern descriptions or abridgements, or at best from the later Greek and Latin writers. The popular conception of the Homeric characters comes, not so much from Homer himself, as from poets like Virgil and Euripidês, who treat Homeric subjects in a non-Homeric manner, and in whose hands both the spirit of the heroic age and the likeness of the individual heroes is utterly defaced and degraded. The school-boy reads Homer as his first Greek poet; but he does not read through the Iliad and Odyssey, and, if he did, he would be unable to fathom their full depth and greatness. In the Universities Homer is strangely neglected for the tragedians. In general life many a man keeps up some knowledge of Latin literature and Latin poets, while, if he has ever gained any real knowledge of those of Greece, he has altogether let it slip. In the very assembly where Mr. Gladstone holds so high a place, it is quite regular to quote the heartless and egotistical talk of the pious Æneas, while one word of the living oratory of Achilleus spoken in his own tongue would be at once cried out against as a breach of order. That unhappy habit, continued in blind imitation of mediæval practice, by which we begin education with the artificial literature of Rome, instead of going at once to the fountain-head of immortal Greece, has done endless harm to Homeric and to all Hellenic study. Mr. Gladstone himself has not escaped. The example of many earlier

scholars, strengthened by the authority of Bishop Thirlwall and Mr. Grote, has fully established the practice of calling the Greek Gods by their own names, instead of those of the analogous Italian deities; yet Mr. Gladstone goes back to the bygone fashion of calling Zeus Jupiter and Athênê Minerva. He disapproves of the practice, but he does it all the same. Now really nothing is more fatal than this. In the first place it is simply a blunder. It is confounding two distinct and very different religions. There is just as much and just as little reason for calling Zeus Jupiter as there is for calling him Woden or Brahma.* And the practice is utterly inconsistent with the aim which Mr. Gladstone so specially seeks after, the separation of the Homeric poems from all later and inferior literature. Mars, Venus, Vulcan, are thoroughly vulgarized; so are Jupiter and Juno somewhat less thoroughly. But the real Olympian Gods are still untouched. Poetasters do not scribble about Arês and Aphroditê; penny-a-liners do not dub the village blacksmith Hêphaistos; nor does any sportsman that we ever heard of call his pointer after the wife and sister of Zeus. Mr. Gladstone, of all men, was bound to keep the Homeric Olympos pure from the introduction of what are practically degrading nicknames. So, in rescuing the hero of Ithaca from the calumnies of Virgil, we would also rescue his name from the perversions of Latin tongues. Ulysses may pass, and welcome, as the cruel and crafty sinner of the Æneid, but let us keep unhurt in name as well as in character the true and brave and wise Achaian hero, the divine Odysseus of Homer.

Mr. Gladstone scarcely enters at all into what is called the 'Homeric controversy.' He takes for granted, and we think quite fairly as regards all the main points, that the controversy exists no longer; that the matter has been set at rest by the unanswerable arguments of Colonel Mure. It shows indeed how truly Mr. Gladstone may complain of Homer being imperfectly understood, when the critics of one age undertook

* [Practically Woden answers to Zeus; philologically the English cognate of Zeus is *Tiw*—the *epônymos* of Tuesday.]

to run him down, and the critics of the next thought it a great exploit to tear him in pieces. How little could men have understood the epic art of Homer, how little could they have entered into the wonderful dramatic power by which every character is clearly conceived and consistently kept up from Alpha of the Iliad to Omega of the Odyssey, when they looked upon the poems as mere chance assemblages of detached ballads! It is to the honour of English common sense that these notions were never very prevalent among us, and that it is by English scholarship that they have been finally overthrown. Mr. Grote, though a partial unbeliever, raised a vigorous protest against the worst forms of unbelief. Colonel Mure and Mr. Gladstone have done the business more thoroughly, and have cast the whole wretched theory to the winds. It is impossible to go through the works of these two great scholars without feeling more and more convinced that the old critics of Alexandria were more skilful in their art than the modern critics of Germany. They have given back to us the living personal Homer, the first of bards and the first of sages, the painter of the whole life of heroic Greece, the man who drew Achilleus and Odysseus, Helen and Pênelopeia, and who peopled Olympos with the grand assemblage of deities created after the likeness of man. They have set up again the true Homeric faith. We have again our Homer, the author of the Iliad and Odyssey, and of the Iliad and Odyssey only, with his works handed down to us in a state nearly as pure as any other part of the ancient literature of Hellas.

But, while Mr. Gladstone has done no more than justice in claiming for Homer his place at the head of the poets of all ages, in claiming for him a paramount authority as the one trustworthy expounder of the heroic life of Greece, we cannot but think that he goes a great deal too far in the amount of positive historical credit which he allows to him. Mr. Gladstone seems almost willing to accept the Iliad as a substantially true metrical chronicle. The case seems to us to be this. Homer is a very high historical authority in a certain sense.

We have no doubt that his heroic age is a real age. It is drawn with all the simplicity and artlessness of a picture taken from the life. Homer describes the sort of scenes which he had seen himself and had heard of from his father. No doubt he describes the heroic life in its best colours; but it is still a real life and not an imaginary one. In a conscious and reflecting age a writer may, by a combination of antiquarian knowledge and poetical genius, produce a vivid picture of a long past age. But such a picture smells of the lamp; it needs an historical student either to produce or thoroughly to enter into it. Or again, a great poet may produce a grand picture out of an utterly fictitious tale, with no reproduction of any age in particular. The former has been at least the aim of writers like Scott and Bulwer. The latter we see in Shakespere's King Lear.* Now nothing is plainer than that the Iliad belongs to neither of these classes. In Homer we cannot talk of either knowledge or ignorance. He simply sets before us the life which he himself lived, described doubtless in its fairest and noblest aspect, but still essentially the real life of his own time. For all points of archæology, all customs, forms of government, modes of religious belief, we refer to Homer with unshaken faith. And, if we accept him as an authority at all, it clearly follows that we must, with Mr. Gladstone, accept him as a paramount authority, differing in kind from all others. For he alone is a direct witness; every one else speaks at secondhand.

But this is quite another matter from following Mr. Gladstone in his whole length of accepting Homer, as he really seems to do, as strictly an historical authority, if not on the level of Thucydides, at any rate on that of Herodotus. To justify us in this we need something like corroborative evidence, something like testimony as to the time when he lived, and the means of knowledge which he had. But

* [I might add Macbeth; for, though Lear is an imaginary person, while Macbeth and his much calumniated wife really lived, they have been changed into imaginary persons in the hands of legend-makers.]

such corroborative testimony utterly fails us. We know nothing either of Homer or of the Homeric heroes except from Homer himself. We have no kind of chronology, no means of judging how long a time passed between the events themselves and the bard who sang of them. He may, as a boy, have seen Odysseus as an old man, or he may have thought of Odysseus as living ages before himself. We cannot tell one way or another. Mr. Gladstone himself has shown how little is proved either way by such sayings as that about *οἷοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσί*. Now, in either case, we may be sure that Homer's picture of Odysseus faithfully sets forth the manners and feelings of his own time, whether his own time was really the time of Odysseus or not. Such is always the case with a purely native and unlearned poetry. In either case he is equally great as a poet, equally valuable as an archæological witness. But the two supposed cases make simply all the difference as to his strictly historical credit. In short we are not in a position to judge. We have no means of cross-examining our witness. We can neither accept his story nor cast it aside.

Analogy may indeed help us a little. Homer gives us a poetical account of events of which we have no historical record. Now other ages give us poetical or romantic accounts of events of which we have also the real history*. In these cases we commonly find a certain foundation of fact, but the truth is covered over with fictitious details. A few leading persons, a few leading events, are still preserved, but the great bulk of the tale is fabulous. The names of Attila and Theodoric may be just seen, and no more, in the old Teutonic romances. There is an Arthur and a Charlemagne of history, an Arthur and a Charlemagne of romance.† Of

* [I have since said something on this head in the Essay on the Mythical and Romantic Elements in Early English History, in my former series.]

† [I should now say a *Charles* of history and a *Charlemagne* of romance. The distinction is convenient, and I wish that we had one of the same kind to distinguish the real Arthur who fought against Cerdic from the mythical subject of so many romances and poems.]

the Arthur of history we can only say that he was a British prince who withstood the English invaders. In Geoffrey of Monmouth he does exploits rather in the style of the Seven Champions of Christendom. Of the Charlemagne of history, thanks to Eginhard and the Capitularies, we know far more than of many much later Kings. But the Charlemagne of romance, with his adventures at Constantinople and Jerusalem, is quite another person from the Charles who beheaded the Saxons and was crowned by Pope Leo at Rome. Whenever we have the means of judging in such cases, we find that there is a kernel of truth; but it is a kernel so overlaid with fiction, that, without external help, it is impossible to distinguish the two.

We have here taken an analogy very unfavourable to Homer, but it is one which we think justifies us in assuming that the Homeric poems do contain some portion of true history. We cannot fancy that they are less trustworthy than the romances of Charlemagne and Arthur. It is very likely that they are much more trustworthy. It is very likely that Homer lived much nearer to the events which he records, and that he was much more careful of truth in recording them. The chances are greatly in favour of the Homeric poems containing very much more historical truth than the mediæval romances. But we are not in a position to measure the exact amount of truth. We cannot dogmatize either way. In the worst case we may be pretty sure there is some truth; in the best case we may be pretty sure there is a good deal of fiction. But we cannot say how much is truth and how much is fiction, except when we can find some external evidence, either to corroborate or to confute, or else when there is some internal evidence which carries with it an overwhelming conviction either of truth or of falsehood.

Now for some points of the Homeric story strong external evidence may be brought in corroboration. It is the fault of the school represented by Sir G. C. Lewis to rely too much upon written books only, and almost to put out of sight

the growing sciences of archæology and ethnology. But these last sometimes step in very opportunely to confirm the legend. The Iliad speaks of a great King of Mykênê as warring on the coast of Asia. To one who knew Greece only from Herodotus and Thucydides the story would seem absurd. In their pages Mykênê appears utterly insignificant; Homer's picture of it as the capital of Peloponnêsos might be cast aside as wholly incredible. But go to the place itself, look at the wonderful remains of early magnificence which are still there, and the difficulty at once vanishes. Legend and archæology between them have kept alive a truth which history has lost. We may fairly set down the Pelopid dynasty as a real dynasty. But, if we are asked whether Atreus and Agamemnôn were real persons, we have no evidence to make us decide either way. Again, the settlement of large bodies of Greeks on the Asiatic shore is an undoubted fact. And it is impossible not to connect with this undoubted fact the legend of the Trojan war. It is impossible not to believe that the warfare of Agamemnôn represents some stage or other of the process which made the western coast of Asia Hellenic. Again, ethnological evidence alone would lead us to believe that the Greeks found there a people separated from themselves by no very wide ethnical barrier. This exactly falls in with Homer's portraiture of the Trojans. They are inferior to the Greeks, but they are not broadly distinguished from them in creed, manners, or language. Here ethnology supports legend. That Greeks did war on the Hellespont is certain; that a Mykênaian King may have led them is highly probable. Here then we have clear external evidence corroborating the bare historical kernel around which the poetry of the Iliad has gathered.

Again, there are some places in which internal evidence leads us to the belief that Homer meant to make direct and accurate statements of historical fact. We have never doubted for a moment that the Catalogue in the Iliad is a real picture of the Greek geography of the time. It is quite unlike any

such catalogues in other poems or romances, where distance either of time or space allowed the author to invent at pleasure, and to tickle his audience with strange or high-sounding names. The exact amount of its historical value, the degree to which we are justified in appealing to it to prove the existence of particular persons, depends upon the question which we cannot answer, How long did Homer live after his heroes? But we may surely trust it for the names and the position of cities, for the boundaries of regions, and for their importance relatively to one another. We may be quite sure that, even if Homer's heroes lived ages before him, he would give us the geography of his own times and not that of any other; and in the geography of his own times he could not venture to be otherwise than accurate, with all Greece ready to criticize and confute him.* Again, when he makes Poseidôn foretell that, after Priam and his city had fallen, the children's children of Aineias would still go on reigning in the Troad, it is impossible not to believe that there was, in the poet's days, an existing dynasty, sprung or claiming to spring from Aineias. And on negative points the historical testimony of Homer becomes of the highest importance. If he had ever heard of those Egyptian and Asiatic settlements in Greece which are dreamed of by later writers, it is utterly impossible that there should have been, as there now is, not the slightest reference to them in any portion of the poems. The lines in which Homer describes the passing of the sceptre from father to son along the line of Pelops may or may not be enough evidence to prove the real existence of each of the potentates which they speak of, but, as other evidence has led us to believe that the dynasty is a real dynasty, so this passage may lead us to believe that it was not a dynasty of foreign blood. Had Homer believed the patriarch of the house of Agamemnôn to have been of

* [Every time I read the Homeric Catalogue I am the more convinced that we have in it a real picture of early Greek geography. No conceivable motive can be thought of for its invention at any later time.]

Lydian birth, he would hardly have left the fact to be first told to us by Pindar.

But we must remember, on the other hand, that the silence of Homer on any point is not absolutely conclusive. It is conclusive only when the point is one which we cannot fancy him failing to speak of, had he heard of it. This applies both in divine and in human affairs. Nothing is more certain than that Homer did not invent, however much he may have embellished, either his Olympian mythology or his Trojan war. The constant references which the Odyssey contains to matters which do not come within the range of the Iliad, fully show that there was a great mass of floating Troic legend, of which Homer only wrought up so much as suited his own purpose. Again, it is equally clear that Homer allowed his own taste or discretion to settle the prominence to be allowed to different portions of his theological system. The series of revolutions by which Zeus was enthroned on Olympos were clearly not unknown to Homer; but, while Æschylus has chosen to bring them prominently forward, Homer has chosen to keep them in the background. It may therefore sometimes happen that even very late and inferior writers may preserve traditions which fill up Homeric gaps or explain Homeric allusions. But we fully grant to Mr. Gladstone that Homer's authority is absolutely paramount; that every other testimony is merely secondary; that, though we may admit some things which are not in Homer, we must admit nothing which is inconsistent with Homer.

In what we have already said we have gone through pretty nearly all that we have to say on Mr. Gladstone's Prolegomena, and we have forestalled some parts of the later divisions of his work. Of its three volumes, the first contains 'Prolegomena' and 'Achæis, or the Ethnology of the Greek Races;' the second is wholly devoted to 'Olympus, or the Religion of the Homeric Age;' the third contains 'Agorè, Politics of the Homeric Age;' 'Ilios: Trojans and Greeks compared;' 'Thalassa: the Outer Geography;' 'Aoidos: some points of the Poetry of Homer.' Here is matter

enough, matter whose full examination would need a volume rather than an essay, if we were to examine with any minuteness. The treatment of the different sections too is widely different, both in kind and in merit. Rightly to deal with some of them would involve a minute examination of nearly the whole Homeric text. Other parts are of a more general character, and to them we shall chiefly confine our attention.

The division headed 'Thalassa' we shall not go into at all. It is entirely devoted to points of minute mythical geography, which, if examined at all, must be examined in great detail. It is better to pass it by than to deal with it cursorily and unworthily. We will only say that it shows Mr. Gladstone's never-failing minuteness and never-failing ingenuity in a high degree; but we decline to pronounce any opinion for or against the accuracy of his theory.

'Achæis' is a division which we cannot undertake to examine in detail, and which yet we cannot pass by quite so briefly as 'Thalassa.' It is, to our minds, the weakest part of the book: and we shall presently give our reasons for thinking so.

'Olympus' is perhaps the most important part of the work, and it shows most fully all the strength and all the weakness of the author's mind. 'Agorè,' 'Ilios,' and 'Aoidos,' all contain much attractive and admirable matter, mingled with things here and there from which we dissent. To these four sections we shall give our chief attention, without binding ourselves minutely to follow Mr. Gladstone's arrangement.

But, first, for a few words as to the ethnological portion of the work, the section headed 'Achæis.' It is no disparagement to Mr. Gladstone to say that he is not an ethnologer. He is so many things that are great and good that he can afford to be told that he has made a mistake in entering at all on this particular field. We do not know how far our conjecture is really correct; but it seems to us that while Mr. Gladstone has always kept up his general scholarship in other respects, he is a kind of *serus studiorum* in this

special branch. Now ethnology, like every other science, needs a preliminary discipline, and the greatest mind cannot deal with the subject offhand. Of Mr. Gladstone's wonderfully minute study of the poems, of the wonderful ingenuity of his mind, this section gives perhaps the fullest proof of any. But it is equally clear that he has no scientific way of looking at ethnological problems. He seems to have no clear view of the general relations between the great divisions of the human family. He is carried away by small points of incidental likeness and unlikeness. He finds a kindred between Pelasgians and Egyptians, because both are agricultural and neither (according to him) maritime. At the end of his inquiry, he seems to identify Medes, Egyptians, and Pelasgians with the remains of the Allophylian races in western and northern Europe. If this means anything, it must mean that Medes, Egyptians, and Pelasgians were all Turanian, a view which certainly struck us with no small amazement. We had long ago made up our own minds that the Pelasgians and the Hellênes differed pretty much as the different branches, or rather as the different stages, of the Teutonic nations; as Danes from Germans, or rather perhaps as Anglo-Saxons* from modern Englishmen. These Turanian Pelasgians were, according to Mr. Gladstone, overlaid by the Aryan Hellênes fresh from Persia. His arguments seem to be, that the names Ἕλλοι and Ἕλληνες come near to that of the *Eelleats* in modern Persia; that, on the other hand, the name of *Fars* or *Persia* is met with again in the hero *Perseus* and the goddess *Persephoné*; that *Achaimenés* and *Achaia* may be connected; that there is some likeness between the manners of the heroic Greeks and those of the nomad tribes of modern Persia. Now there is a good deal of Turkish blood in modern Persia; and one would like to be quite sure how many of Mr. Gladstone's Eelleats are true Iranians of the land of light, and how many are Turanian

* [I should not now talk about 'Anglo-Saxons' as opposed to 'modern Englishmen.' But it should be remembered that the word 'Anglo-Saxon' is a perfectly good word, if people would only use it in its right meaning.]

impostors from the land of darkness. But granting that the forefathers of every living Eelleat were found under the banner of Roostam, what does it all prove? We really never knew a man of a fourth part of Mr. Gladstone's understanding patch up a theory on such wretchedly slender evidence. Undoubtedly the Hellênes and the Persians are connected, because both are members of the great Aryan family; but we cannot see the slightest sign of any more special connexion. Greeks and Persians are kindred; so are Greeks and Hindoos, Greeks and Teutons, Greeks and Slaves, Greeks and Celts. But Mr. Gladstone's special Helleno-Persian brotherhood seems to us to rest upon no good ground whatever. It is just the sort of thought which might come into the mind of an ingenious man who had heard of some of the discoveries of modern ethnology, but who had not learned to look at them in their scientific bearings. But it is quite unworthy of Mr. Gladstone. He is a man whom we may fairly ask to forbear from dealing with any subject except the many of which he is master.

We will now turn to the Olympian division of the work. In treating the mythological side of the Homeric poems, there are two obvious ways of dealing with the subject. The commentator may, if he will, strictly keep himself to the Homeric text; he may bring out, as far as may be, the belief about his Gods which was held by Homer himself; he may compare passage with passage, and, if need be, he may contrast the Homeric picture with that of other poets and philosophers. In short, he may deal with the Gods simply as divine actors in the poems; he may comment on their functions and characters as conceived by the poet, and he may draw whatever lessons, poetical or moral, may be suggested by the part which they play in the story. In such a view as this the origin of the Hellenic mythology, its relation to other religious systems, are altogether beside the question. But in another aspect, these latter questions become altogether paramount, while the mode of dealing with the subject which

may have been followed by Homer or any other Greek poet becomes important only as part of the evidence. Professor Max Müller, in his most striking paper in the Oxford Essays, has shown that there is a science of Comparative Mythology, just as there is a science of Comparative Philology.* The two sciences follow the same process of argument, and indeed, to a great extent, they work upon the same set of facts. Neither the Greek language nor the Greek mythology stands alone; each is a member of a family. Neither of them therefore can be fully understood without reference to the other languages and the other mythologies of the same family. A man who understands neither Sanscrit nor Teutonic may indeed reach to a high degree of Greek scholarship of a certain kind; he may know all the minutest usages of the language, and he may be able fully to enter into every literary beauty of the poet or the orator. So may a man who knows nothing of Indian or Scandinavian mythology no less fully enter into the poetical or the political character of the mythology of Greece; he may fully understand its part in the drama of the Iliad; he may trace its gradual change in later times; he may see clearly how it influenced, and how it was influenced by, the character of the nation. He can indeed, in either case, carry on his researches from Homer onwards into the historic age, but he cannot carry them from Homer backwards into times when even poetical and mythical evidence fails us. Without a knowledge of the languages and the mythologies of ancient India and of the other kindred races, no man can ever deal with the origin either of the Greek language or of the Greek mythology.†

Now with the purely Hellenic and Homeric side of the subject no man is better fitted to deal than Mr. Gladstone. Though the Hellenic mythology is historically a mere frag-

* [It must be remembered that this was written when Comparative Mythology was quite a new subject, and when even Comparative Philology had not made much way in England; otherwise there now seems something amusing in the way in which I wrote then.]

† [This requirement of knowledge must be taken with the limitations which I have made in my Rede Lecture on the Unity of History, p. 17.]

ment of a common earlier system, yet practically, poetically, and politically it is the original creation of the Hellenic mind. In the shape in which we behold it, it bears the full impress of the Hellenic character, the stamp of all that distinguishes the Greek from the other branches of the Aryan stem. As far as the student of Greek literature and of Greek political history is concerned, it is of native Hellenic birth. And it is in the poems of Homer that we find the Hellenic mythology in its earliest and purest form. With this portion of the subject Mr. Gladstone's Hellenic scholarship and Homeric enthusiasm, his keen observation and refined taste, enable him to deal with a master's hand. Allowing for that vein of exaggeration and over-subtlety which runs through the whole work, allowing also for a strange ascetic tone of which we shall again speak, the dramatic character of the Homeric Gods as actors in the Homeric poems, the practical effect of the Homeric religion upon the thoughts and acts of the Homeric man, have been handled in Mr. Gladstone's Olympian volume with a depth, a vigour, a minuteness, and a fullness, with which they have never been handled before. But unluckily Mr. Gladstone has also thought it his duty to set forth a theory of the historical, or rather archæological, origin of the Greek religion. And here he utterly and lamentably fails. He fails for the same reason that he fails in his ethnological section. Scientific ethnology he attempts without being master of it; scientific mythology he does not even attempt. Though he once quotes Professor Müller's Essay, he seems practically not to know that there is such a thing as Comparative Mythology. That the origin of the Greek mythology is to be sought for in some common source with the mythology of India, of Italy, and of Scandinavia is a thought which plainly never came into his mind.

The fact is that Mr. Gladstone has sacrificed the scientific treatment of his subject to a supposed theological necessity. Throughout the book he shows a strange fondness for bringing in references to Scripture, and a strange mixture of timidity and daring in his way of dealing with them. Be-

cause he holds the Old Testament to be the Word of God, because he holds the Hebrews to have been God's chosen people, he forbids us to yield any literary homage to Hebrew writers, or any historical admiration to Hebrew warriors and statesmen. Yet, with a daring which many would call irreverent, he sees a shadow of the Christian Trinity in Zeus, Poseidôn, and Aïdôneus; he sees the seed of the woman in Phoibos Apollôn and the Divine Wisdom in Pallas Athênê. Now this kind of thing is not to be borne. It is fit only for those divines who combine thorough weakness of intellect with a certain amount of school-boy learning, just as mere vulgar reviling of heathens and heathenism befits that other class of divines who find it a hard task to construe either their Homer or their Greek Testament. Mr. Gladstone does not indeed belong to the very worst form of the school; he does not fancy that the Greeks really borrowed, directly or indirectly, from the Jews. He divides the Greek divinities into two classes, Traditive and Inventive. The former he holds to come from recollections, however fragmentary and perverted, of original patriarchal tradition. This tradition was, among the Hebrews, miraculously preserved. Among other nations, it was left to its fate. It was therefore, not indeed wholly lost, but distorted, 'disintegrated,' and mixed up with mere human inventions. From this last source spring the Inventive deities, pure devices of man, embodiments of 'nature-worship,' 'passion-worship,' and mere poetic caprice. Some are of Pelasgian, some are of Hellenic birth, some were brought in from foreign lands. But all are mere human invention; they do not preserve even a distorted form of the genuine patriarchal tradition.

Now our first answer to all this is that Mr. Gladstone's division into 'Traditive' and 'Inventive' deities is a purely arbitrary one. Those deities in which he personally can see traces of primitive tradition he puts in one class, and all the rest he puts in another. The whole thing is pure theory, without a shadow of any external evidence. Another writer might see traces of primitive tradition in Hermês and Aphroditê, and

none at all in Athênê and Apollôn. And, for the reason which we have just given, we maintain that Mr. Gladstone has not earned for himself the right to theorize upon the subject. It is evident that the Aryan nations, before their separation, had made certain advances in knowledge and culture, while certain further advances were made by each separate branch of the race after the dispersion. Now surely, whatever amount of primitive truth is preserved in the Hellenic mythology must have been part of this common intellectual stock of the whole Aryan family. If, after the dispersion, the Hellênes learned any additional truths of which Hindoos or Teutons remained in ignorance, knowledge so gained could not be unbroken patriarchal tradition; it would come near to that special and direct biblical derivation which Mr. Gladstone rightly casts aside. We do not at all dogmatically deny that traces of patriarchal tradition may survive in the Hellenic mythology; but we do say that a man can never find them out by merely sitting down with his Homer on one side and his Bible on the other. He must first of all find out how much of the Hellenic mythology is distinctively Hellenic, how much belongs to the common stock of the whole Aryan family. Otherwise he is acting exactly like a philologer of the last century who derived some Greek word from Hebrew, without thinking of asking whether the root was found in German or Sanscrit. It is highly probable that, both in language and in belief, there is a certain element common to the Aryan and the Semitic families. But it does not do to look for Semitic analogies for any one Aryan language or any one Aryan mythology. The only scientific process is, to ask, First, What have Hellênes, Hindoos, Teutons, &c. in common? Secondly, What have Hebrews, Arabs, &c. in common? Thirdly, What have these two original stocks in common? When Mr. Gladstone has found out the common element in the Greek, Italian, Persian, Indian, Teutonic, Celtic, and Slavonic mythologies, he may then fairly ask how much of this common element is of patriarchal origin,

and how much is due to human invention before the dispersion. Till he has done this, he has no right arbitrarily to set down some Hellenic deities as 'Traditive,' and others as 'Inventive.'

And further still, even if we were in a position to deal with a common Aryan mythology instead of with a merely Hellenic mythology, we should still protest against the particular kind of analogies which are sought for by Mr. Gladstone. In the Homeric mythology he finds traces of the doctrines of the Trinity, of the fall of man, of the promise of Messiah, of the existence and the rebellion of Satan. Now we are here treading on dangerous ground, as we wish, while dealing with the present question, to avoid as far as possible all points of dogmatic theology. But it really seems to us that Mr. Gladstone might just as well go to his Homer for evidence for or against Mr. Gorham or Archdeacon Denison. We say nothing for or against the doctrines for which either of those divines have been called in question; we only say that we cannot find their confirmation or their refutation either in Homer or in the Pentateuch. We say exactly the same of the doctrines for which Mr. Gladstone seeks in the Iliad and Odyssey. Surely the primitive patriarchal tradition of which Mr. Gladstone speaks can be found nowhere else but in the book of Genesis. And we trust that we shall give no offence to the most orthodox mind, if we say that most of the doctrines of which Mr. Gladstone speaks are not to be found in the book of Genesis. It is the very essence of Christianity to be a religion of progression; even before we come to actual Christian teaching, nothing can be plainer than that far clearer and loftier ideas of the divine nature were granted to the Prophets than any that can be found in the Law. It is thoroughly weak to try to prove that the contemporaries of Abraham had equal light with the contemporaries of Saint Paul, or even with the contemporaries of Isaiah. We claim the right to do for Moses the same good service which Mr. Gladstone has done for Homer. We can accept nothing as patriarchal tradition except what we can find in a literal

and grammatical construction of the text of the book of Genesis. We are so much in the habit of reading the Hebrew records by the light of Christian and later Jewish glosses that few people know what is there and what is not. We have known people who fully believed that the book of Genesis said, in so many words, that 'the Devil tempted Eve,' and we have seen them stand altogether aghast at finding that there was nothing of the kind there. Now surely no one who reads the book of Genesis, forgetting as far as possible all later books, will find in it any of those doctrines of which Mr. Gladstone sees traces in the Homeric poems.* Genesis tells us of a serpent beguiling Eve by his natural subtlety, and of the mutual hatred thence following between men and serpents. Genesis tells us of giants begotten between the sons of God and the daughters of men. Genesis and the books which follow it contain passages which, if they were found in Homer, would certainly be understood as implying highly anthropophuistic views of Deity. It is in the image of God that man was created. The Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. God smelled a sweet savour from Noah's sacrifice. The Lord went his way after communing with Abraham. The elders saw God, and did eat and drink. Moses saw the back parts of God, but might not see his face. On the other hand, we find no reference whatever to a future state; we find not a word against polygamy; we find marriages with an aunt, a wife's sister, a man's own half-sister, having at least the sanction of patriarchal example. We presume not to comment or to interpret; we only say what is in the book. To us nothing can be clearer than that, through the whole history of Judaism and Christianity, new light has been continually given; indeed, no Christian, to be a Christian at all, can deny this, though he may weakly strive to escape

* [Let me say that in all this passage I simply gave the results of my own thought. I never read a word of any of the German writers on biblical matters, and later controversies in our own tongue had not begun when this was written.]

the consequences. All Mr. Gladstone's doctrines are later doctrines; they are later deductions, later developements, later revelations, if he pleases, which he has no right to set down as forming any part of patriarchal tradition. The personification of the Logos or the Wisdom cannot be traced back beyond the book of Proverbs, and there it appears only in a most rudimentary shape. Yet this is the doctrine of which Mr. Gladstone finds a traditionary vestige in Athênê. There is not a shadow of evidence that the ancient Hebrews had any distinct,* if any, idea of a Divine Trinity, that they had any idea at all of a future Deliverer at once divine and human, or any idea of evil spirits at warfare with, or in rebellion against, the Most High.† We find the first clear traces of these doctrines in writings much later than the time of Homer. Mr. Gladstone has no right to take for granted that they were handed down from the beginning by unwritten tradition. He brings no sort of proof, and all probability is against it. He cannot show that they formed any part of the patriarchal creed; he has therefore no right to look for even the most perverted vestiges of them in the primitive mythology of Hellas.

While dealing with Mr. Gladstone's treatment of this portion of his subject, we cannot help expressing our amazement at the chapter which concludes the Olympian volume; that headed, 'The Office of the Homeric Poems in relation to that of the early Books of Holy Scripture.' We must copy the following passage at length:—

'Should we, like some writers of the present day, cite the Pentateuch before the tribunal of the mere literary critic, we may strain our generosity

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* We speak thus guardedly, because of two remarkable passages, which will at once occur to the reader, in the early part of Genesis. But few scholars now believe that even these passages have the meaning which was formerly so often attributed to them, and certainly the general mode of speaking throughout that book would not suggest the idea of a plurality of persons in the Godhead.

† If we rightly understand Mr. Gladstone, he looks upon Kronos as a representative of Satan, and yet holds that the Kronid brothers represent the divine Trinity. One stands aghast at this amazing piece of theogony.

at the cost of justice, and still only be able to accord to it a secondary place. The mistake surely is to bring it there at all, or to view its author otherwise than as the vehicle of a divine purpose, which uses all instruments, great, insignificant, or middling, according to the end in view; but of which all the instruments are perfect, by reason, not of what is intrinsic to themselves, but, simply and solely, of their exact adaptation to that end.

If, however, we ought to decline to try the Judaic code by its merely political merits, much more ought we to apply the same principle to the sublimity of the prophecies, and to the deep spiritual experiences of the Psalms. In the first, we have a voice speaking from God, with the marks that it is of God so visibly imprinted upon it, that the mind utterly refuses to place the prophetical books in the scale against any production of human genius. And all that is peculiar in our conception of Isaiah, or of Jeremiah, does not tend so much to make them eminent among men, as to separate them from men. Homer, on the other hand, is emphatically and above all things human: he sings by the spontaneous and the unconscious indwellings of nature; whereas these are as the trumpet of unearthly sounds, and cannot, more than Balaam could, depart from that which is breathed into them, to utter either less or more.

But most of all does the Book of Psalms refuse the challenge of philosophical or poetical competition. In that book, for well-nigh three thousand years, the piety of saints has found its most refined and choicest food; to such a degree, indeed, that the rank and quality of the religious frame may in general be tested, at least negatively, by the height of its relish for them. There is the whole music of the human heart, when touched by the hand of the Maker, in all its tones that whisper or that swell, for every hope and fear, for every joy and pang, for every form of strength and languor, of disquietude and rest. There are developed all the innermost relations of the human soul to God, built upon the platform of a covenant of love and sonship that had its foundations in the Messiah, while in this particular and privileged book it was permitted to anticipate His coming.

We can no more, then, compare Isaiah and the Psalms with Homer, than we can compare David's heroism with Diomed's, or the prowess of the Israelites when they drove Philistia before them with the valour of the Greeks at Marathon or Platæa, at Issus or Arbela. We shall most nearly do justice to each by observing carefully the boundary-lines of their respective provinces.'

All this is evidently heartfelt, and it almost deserves the name of eloquence; yet it is to us simply unintelligible. Mr. Gladstone, by way of reverence for certain writings, actually goes out of his way to disparage them. Why cannot he accept the Hebrew writings for all that he says, and yet not deny the palpable fact that they are also the literature of the Hebrew nation,—its whole literature, historical, political, and poetical, as well as strictly theological? Why should the Pentateuch, as a literary work, be content with a secondary

place? Could Homer or Æschylus or Dante surpass the grandeur of the Song of Moses? What is there that 'separates Isaiah and Jeremiah from men'? What is more truly and beautifully human than the lament of Jeremiah over the city sitting solitary which once was full of people? What Lombard dreaming of the rending of the yoke of Habsburg, what Greek or Bosnian looking for the final overthrow of the trembling Ottoman, could desire a truer pæan of a nation's vengeance than Isaiah's hymn of triumph over the doomed tyrant of Babel?* What is there in the noblest of the Psalms, in the seventy-eighth, in the hundred and fourth and those which follow it, which need 'refuse the challenge of poetical competition' against the noblest poetry of the whole world? And the last paragraph, seemingly designed to explain, only makes matters darker still. We do not compare the prowess of the Israelites at Gath or Gob with that of the Greeks at Plataia or Arbêla, simply because we doubt whether the Hebrews knew any such skilful order as the Dorian phalanx, or wielded any weapon so effective as the Macedonian sarissa. But why we may not compare the heroism of David and that of Diomêdês is altogether beyond our understanding. May we compare Greeks and Jews only in their sins, and not in their virtues? Mr. Gladstone himself, in one place, draws out an elaborate comparison between the demeanour of Bathsheba and that of Helen. But must we look upon the mutual love of Jonathan and David as less touching, less thoroughly human, than that of Achilleus and Patroklos, because one is recorded in a Hellenic, and the other in a Hebrew volume?

We wonder then not a little at the strange mixture of daring and timidity which Mr. Gladstone shows in his way of dealing with the Old-Testament records; and we dissent altogether from the way in which he tries to connect those records with the Greek mythology. We therefore altogether reject that division into Traditive and Inventive deities

* [Surely that glorious hymn never sounded in men's ears with a more thrilling voice than in September 1870.]

which forms the groundwork of his whole system. And with our notions of the relations between Pelasgians and Hellênes, we see hardly more ground for his division of the Inventive deities into Pelasgian and Hellenic, or for his derivation of some of them from Phœnician or other foreign sources. We hold the Greek mythology to be, exactly like the Greek language, a Hellenic developement from the common primæval stock of the Aryan races. The scientific problem is to show how much is shared by other Aryan nations, how much is distinctively Hellenic. The next enquiry would be, what Asiatic elements were mingled in the later Greek religion after the date of the Greek settlements in Asia. It is clear that the later Greeks practised both Barbarian rites and Barbarian vices; but in Homer we find no trace of either. Of these two questions, the latter hardly comes within Mr. Gladstone's scope; the former, in the view he has chosen to take of his subject, certainly does so; but he has nowhere even tried to examine it.

We think then that the general principle of Mr. Gladstone's 'Olympus' is altogether inadmissible. But we can hardly speak too highly of the services in detail which he has done to the study of the Homeric religion. The dramatic aspect of the several deities, the conception which Homer had formed of each, their powers, their functions, their physical and moral attributes, the features in which Homer's idea of each differs from that of later writers,—all these points have been studied by him with minute and affectionate care, and they are brought out in his work with a fullness and accuracy of detail, with an union of taste and moral feeling, such as we have never seen before. Every reader of the poems must have remarked the vast superiority of Apollôn and Athênê over all their fellow divinities; but few probably have taken the trouble to bring together the evidence of their superiority in the way in which it has been brought together by Mr. Gladstone. They are clearly not subject either to the same physical restrictions or to the same moral weaknesses as the other dwellers on Olympos. All this, according to

Mr. Gladstone, shows them to be Traditive deities; the proofs which he brings together to that end, are most valuable for other purposes, but the main argument altogether fails. For Zeus too is a Traditive deity, and Zeus is pursued by Mr. Gladstone with a relentless enmity. Smile-loving Aphroditê, golden Aphroditê, fares no better. Mr. Gladstone is a stern moralist, and will have no pity on the transgressions of either father or daughter. Altogether we think that Mr. Gladstone's picture of Olympos is a little over-drawn. He tells us that the Homeric men are much better than the Homeric Gods. This, to a certain extent, is true; though Mr. Gladstone is certainly a little over-partial to the Homeric men, and, we think, a little over-severe upon the Homeric Gods. But is not something of what Mr. Gladstone complains almost inherent in any polytheistic system? May not its rudiments be found in every attempt of man to conceive of Deity at all? The Homeric Gods live regardless of the restraints which they themselves impose on men. Their moral standard is lower; they are more selfish, more capricious, more sensual, than their worshippers. Now it is hardly possible to conceive of a divine being as governed by the same moral laws which rule mankind. Many Christian divines tell us that morality is simply conformity to the Divine will. The Deity is here looked at as the maker of the moral law, but not as being himself bound by it; and there is probably no religion in which devout men do not find difficulties in reconciling what they believe of the object of their worship with the rules which they follow in shaping their own earthly life. Now, in a monotheistic creed, the Deity may be thus placed, as it were, above human morality, and no immoral influences need follow. But when we come to a polytheistic system, to many anthropophuistic Gods dwelling in an organized society, in such a case to be above human morality easily slides into being below human morality. A monotheistic religion looks on the Godhead as all-wise and all-powerful. Polytheism cannot make each of its deities separately all-wise and all-powerful; power and

wisdom must at any rate be divided among them. The idea of deity in any case implies superior happiness to that of mortals; the Gods, free from death and from old age, cannot lead man's life of pain and labour. But, if so, they can hardly be made subject to the rules of law and responsibility in the same manner as their worshippers. Each God may find hindrances to the carrying out of his personal will; but the Gods, as a body, must exercise a will uncontrollable and irresponsible. Deity, in any case, carries out its own pleasure; but it is easy to see what must be the pleasure of a company of anthropophuistic Gods. The loftiest virtues of man are those which arise most directly out of the imperfection of man's nature: deity allows no scope for their exercise. No wonder then if the Homeric Gods are selfish, capricious, and sensual; it is rather to the credit of Homer and his contemporaries that they are nothing worse. The Gods of many mythologies are positively malevolent and cruel,—attributes which we can hardly fasten even upon the Arês of Homer. The Hellenic Gods may be both sensual and selfish; but neither cruelty nor obscenity forms any part of their worship. The Hellenic Gods are at least men; those of many mythologies are brutes or fiends.

Closely connected with all this is one of the most remarkable features of Mr. Gladstone's work; the ascetic, the almost monastic, sternness of its moral tone. We honour him alike for the loftiness and for the straightforwardness of his teaching; it is certainly far better to talk with him in plain words about 'lust' and 'adultery,' than to speak in the common flippant way of 'amours,' 'intrigues,' 'gallantries,' and the like. We believe that Mr. Gladstone is essentially right; but he certainly goes too far; in short, he becomes monastic. It is in this respect, above all others, that he is unfairly hard upon his Gods and unfairly partial to his men. The first aspect of the Homeric creed in this respect shows us two opposite phænomena. On the one hand, the passions of the Gods are far more unrestrained than those of men; but, on the other hand, there is in Olympos something

like that monastic reverence for virginity of which we find no trace on the Hellenic earth. The sexual morality of the Homeric Greeks was manifestly far purer than that of their successors, far purer than that of Eastern nations. But of the mediæval notion of virginity there is not a trace. The virgin must remain a virgin till she becomes a matron, but a virgin she must some time cease to be. In Olympos, on the other hand, the Gods, Zeus above all, practise polygamy, adultery, and seduction, without scruple. But to set against that, we have in Athênê, in Artemis, in Hestiê, the virgin character as distinctly marked as in any mediæval saint; it is more remarkable still if, as seems highly probable, we are to look on the same character as a feature of the male deity Apollôn. It seems as if two opposite notions were striving for the mastery. It seems naturally to follow that anthropophuistic beings should beget and be begotten; and, once granting this, it would be hard to conceive how powers raised above human law and responsibility could be tied down by the restraints of human matrimonial rules. To be placed above humanity becomes, in this respect, almost the same thing as to be placed below it. Yet it is clear that in all this there is something very repugnant to any idea of deity, especially to any idea of female deity. As regular monogamy was the idea of the divine condition least easy to be imagined, the Greek carried out the two opposite conceptions in all their fullness on either side. He pictured to himself libertine deities and virgin deities, but few or no regular and respectable married couples. Hence we get the profligate Zeus and the pure Apollôn, the adulteress Aphroditê and the chaste maiden Athênê. The purity of Apollôn and Athênê is brought out strongly by Mr. Gladstone in his portraits of them as 'Traditive' deities; but he has hardly given prominence enough to the general idea of virgin deities as a set-off against the idea of libertine deities.

If the sexual vices of the gods are looked on as the natural result of their position, it would seem that lack of shame about such matters would almost unavoidably follow.

Mr. Gladstone complains bitterly that so it is: men and women, if they err, are at least ashamed of their errors; Gods and Goddesses unblushingly avow theirs. But we are not sure that such is altogether the case. It would be quite logical if it were so; but an anthropophuistic creed would easily, at the expense of logic, transport shame, as well as other human feelings, into the breasts of the immortals. Now surely the whole song of Dêmodokos assumes such a feeling of shame. Arês and Aphroditê are heartily ashamed of being caught; while it is the same feeling of shame—that αἰδώς about which Mr. Gladstone has much to say—which hinders the Goddesses from coming to see them in the toils of Hêphaistos. Mr. Gladstone says that the trespass of an immortal is never dealt with in so tender and delicate a tone as that of the maiden Astyochê,

παρθένος αἰδοίη, ὑπερώϊον εἰσαναβᾶσα.

If we may break Mr. Gladstone's canon of never stepping beyond the Iliad and Odyssey, we would appeal to the beautiful 'Homeric' hymn to Aphroditê. Mr. Gladstone's rule seems to be, that after Homer things could never get better, but only get worse. Now certainly the Aphroditê of the hymn is very far from the grossly sensual Aphroditê on whom Mr. Gladstone is so severe. Certainly, as Colonel Mure says,* 'The author has here treated a licentious subject, not merely with grace and elegance, but with an entire freedom from meretricious ornament.' Colonel Mure looks on the poem, and we fully go along with his opinion, as being probably indeed not Homeric, but certainly as being in no way unworthy of Homer.

The morals of the Gods can hardly be separated from the morals of the heroes. As we said, the sexual morality of heroic Greece is far above that of later Greece, far above that of any Eastern people. The higher position of women in the Homeric age has been admirably worked out by Mr. Gladstone. He also distinctly brings forward the marked

* Literature of Ancient Greece, vol. iii. p. 346.

difference between early and later Greece in the absence in early times of those strange perversions of the passions which really had a most important effect upon later Greek society. We must remember that the tie which bound Harmodios and Aristogeitôn, which united men like Solôn, Aristeidês, and Epameinôndas to the objects of their affections, was not the mere brutality of a Turkish pasha; the whole set of sentiments implied in the notion of romantic love had been thus strangely turned away from their natural direction. Hence this strange side of later Greek society went hand in hand with the later Greek seclusion of women. Both customs doubtless, notwithstanding the strange assertion of Herodotus the other way, were corruptions which were brought into Greece from an Eastern source. The harlot again,—a character familiar enough in later Greece, not unknown at an early stage of Oriental life,—is nowhere seen in the Homeric poems. But Mr. Gladstone certainly tries to make out somewhat too strict a monogamy for his heroes. His notion is that the only breach of the strict law of marriage which the heroic code tolerated was that each of the chiefs, when away from home before Troy, allowed himself a single captive concubine. Brisêis, in his view, is the wife of Achilleus, or at least she stands to him in a relation hardly to be distinguished from marriage.* The damsels offered to him by Agamemnôn were, according to Mr. Gladstone, not intended as concubines. To us it is clear that they were to be whatever Brisêis was; they and Brisêis are classed together. In Agamemnôn's offer † we find the words—

> *δώσει δ' ἑπτὰ γυναῖκας ἀμύμονας, ἔργ' εἰδυίας,*
> *Λεσβίδας, ἃς, ὅτε Λέσβον ἐΰκτιμένην ἔλες αὐτὸς,*
> *ἐξέλεθ', αἳ τότε κάλλει ἐνίκων φῦλα γυναικῶν.*
> *τὰς μέν τοι δώσει, μετὰ δ' ἔσσεται, ἥν τότ' ἀπηύρα*
> *κούρην Βρισῆος.*

* [Something, I conceive, like the marriage *more Danico* of which we hear a good deal in early Norman and English history. It must be remembered that Brisêis herself (Il. xix. 299) draws the distinction between her own position and that of a wife.]

† Il. ix. 270. [Cf. xix. 246.]

So again in the speech of Aias in the same book *—

> σοὶ δ' ἄλληκτόν τε κακόν τε
> θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι θεοὶ θέσαν, εἵνεκα κούρης
> οἵης· νῦν δέ τοι ἑπτὰ παρίσχομεν ἔξοχ' ἀρίστας,
> ἄλλα τε πόλλ' ἐπὶ τῇσι.

Were these Lesbian women to be prized only as ἔργ' εἰδυῖαι? One of their countrywomen certainly was thought worthy to fill the place of Brisêis herself. When the messengers were gone,

> Ἀχιλλεὺς εὖδε μυχῷ κλισίης εὐπήκτου·
> τῷ δ' ἄρα παρκατέλεκτο γυνὴ, τὴν Λεσβόθεν ἦγε,
> Φόρβαντος θυγάτηρ, Διομήδη καλλιπάρῃος. †

The fact is that the heroes evidently allowed themselves full Mahometan privileges with regard to 'those whom their right hands did possess.' Regular marriages were the law of heroic Hellas; adultery was abhorred; prostitution was unheard of; but concubinage with captives clearly brought no discredit on either party. And is not the relation of Gods to mortals very like that of conquerors to captives? The irregularity in either case was not so much immoral as extra-moral; it implied no corruption and it carried with it no dishonour. And it may be doubted whether, on this particular point, historic Greece was not more scrupulous than heroic Greece. The conduct which is recorded of Achilleus as a matter of course is brought up as an unheard-of crime against Alkibiadês. Alkibiadês, who counselled the destruction of Mêlos, had a son by a Melian captive. This, according to Andokidês or whoever speaks in his name, was something worse than the evil deeds of all the sinners represented on the tragic stage, and the birth of the child is spoken of as more unlawful than that of Aigisthos.‡

* Il. ix. 632. † Ibid. 659.

‡ Ὅς τηλικαύτας ποιεῖται τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ὑπερβολὰς, ὥστε περὶ τῶν Μηλίων γιώμην ἀποφηνάμενος ἐξανδραποδίζεσθαι, πριάμενος γυναῖκα τῶν αἰχμαλώτων νῦν ἐξ αὐτῆς πεποίηται, ὡς τοσούτῳ παρανομωτέρως Αἰγίσθου γέγονεν, ὥστ' ἐκ τῶν ἐχθίστων ἀλλήλοις πέφυκε, καὶ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων ὑπάρχει αὐτῷ τὰ ἔσχατα τοὺς μὲν πεποιηκέναι τοὺς δὲ πεπονθέναι· ἄξιον δὲ τὴν τόλμαν αὐτοῦ σαφέστερον ἔτι διελθεῖν (which is done at some length). Ἀνδοκ. κατ. Ἀλκ. 22. Surely the moral of the case is not greatly affected by the difference between ἕλες αὐτὸς and γνώμην ἀποφηνάμενος ἐξανδραποδίζεσθαι, between Λεσβόθεν ἦγε and πριάμενος.

The language is certainly exaggerated; the story may be true or false; the speech may be genuine or spurious; but there is the sentiment, one which the lovers of Chrysêis and Brisêis would certainly not have entered into.

The language of Homer on all these subjects is simply natural. He is neither prudish nor prurient, neither monastic nor meretricious. He sets forth the whole life of his Gods and of his heroes; whether he is speaking of Zeus or of Achilleus, of Alkinoos or of Odysseus, the companion of his bed, whether wife or concubine, is recorded in precisely the same matter-of-fact way as the materials of his dinner. Mr. Gladstone is scandalized at the advice which Thetis gives, in plain language, to her mourning son,* and he comforts himself that it is only a divine and not a human mother who uses it. But does Thetis do anything more than say straightforwardly what other people think, but do not say? Make the language a little less direct; talk about

> 'Lovely Thaïs sits beside thee;
> Take the gifts the gods provide thee;'

and it may with propriety be read aloud in a family: dilate and dilute it a little more into mere commonplaces about love and beauty, and no ears and no tongues will shrink from what is essentially the same doctrine. Homer doubtless thought that he was simply stating an undoubted fact of man's nature, the truth of which the wise Odysseus and the chaste Pênelopeia did not scruple practically to acknowledge.†

We have dwelled perhaps over long on these subjects because of the prominence which Mr. Gladstone has given to them, and the very curious way in which he has treated them. But his general picture of the heroic Greeks is very true and

* τέκνον ἐμὸν, τέο μέχρις ὀδυρόμενος καὶ ἀχεύων,
σὴν ἔδεαι κραδίην, μεμνημένος οὐδέ τι σίτου,
οὔτ' εὐνῆς; ἀγαθὸν δὲ γυναικί περ ἐν φιλότητι
μίσγεσθ'. Il. xxiv. 128.

Achilleus, as Mr. Gladstone says (ii. 464), makes no direct answer; but, later in the book (xxiv. 676), he practically accepts his mother's counsel.

† Od. xxiii. 295-300.

noble. There is in it indeed somewhat of exaggeration. Mr. Gladstone, after so many years in the House of Commons, seems to be getting rather tired of the nineteenth century. The age of Periklês or Dêmosthenês is one too like to his own to give him any relief; he plunges with increased enthusiasm into a state of things more distant and more unlike. How thoroughly and genially he has gone into the life and feelings of those old times may be seen from his highly wrought description of the life of an Achaian of the heroic times.* It is one of the gems of the book: it would, as a description, be a gem in any book; but we suspect that Homer himself would hardly have known his heroes again in a picture from which nearly all the shades are left out.

The last volume is, we think, on the whole, the best of the three. It gives more room for the exercise of the higher qualities of the author's mind, and less for the display of his ethnological and theological crotchets. On the section 'Thalassa,' as we before said, we give no opinion; nor do we mean to dwell at length on some minute and very ingenious criticisms on the sense of number and of colour in Homer, which are contained in the section 'Aoidos.' We have then the sections 'Agorè' and 'Ilios,' and the remaining portions of 'Aoidos,' left before us.

The section 'Agorè' is one which could hardly have been written by any man but one in whom the characters of statesman and scholar are so happily united as Mr. Gladstone. Brim-full as it is of true Homeric scholarship, almost every page contains some little touch or other which shows that it comes from one who is no solitary student, but a man to whom the *βουλαί* and the *ἀγοραί* of real life are matters of every-day experience. In several parts of his argument, Mr. Gladstone grapples very successfully with Mr. Grote. Mr. Grote's strong point lies in historic Greece; his great glory is

* Vol. ii. 468—470.

to have vindicated the character of democratic Athens. But to this darling object of his affections he has sacrificed some other objects not wholly unworthy of regard. Like the Thracian potentate in Aristophanês,

ἐν τοῖσι τοίχοις ἔγραφ', Ἀθηναῖοι καλοί·

but he has forgotten that something worthy of his admiration might have been found in federal Achaia, something perhaps even in monarchic Macedonia, still more than either in the common source of all, in the institutions of heroic Hellas. Mr. Grote can see nothing in the Homeric state of things but a degrading picture of submission on the part of the people towards their princes. This is simply because Homer does not record any formal division, any solemn telling of votes, such as Mr. Grote is familiar with both in Saint Stephen's and upon the Pnyx. Also perhaps because of the chastisement dealt out by Odysseus to Thersitês, which would hardly appear scandalous on the other side of the Atlantic.* Mr. Gladstone, less enamoured of democracy, while an equal hater of tyranny, sees more clearly into the truth of the matter. Possibly he goes too far the other way, for it would seem that he looks on the institutions of historic Greece as corruptions rather than developements of the heroic model. Mr. Grote complains that in the Homeric Assembly nobody but the princes talk, nobody at all votes, and that the will of the King of Men always prevails. He is therefore half inclined to look upon the whole thing as a sham. Mr. Gladstone reminds him that the other princes often oppose Agamemnôn, and that the mass of the army, if they do not talk, at any rate cheer. Now to cheer, as he most truly argues, is in truth to take a very practical share in the debate. Mr. Gladstone most happily compares the Homeric Assembly to such a scene as an English county meeting, where it seldom happens that the speaking goes beyond a select few, where a volunteer

* [I was thinking, I believe, of the dastardly attack on Mr. Sumner in the Senate-House—an act largely approved in the Southern States—which was then a fresh story.]

speaker is far from meeting with encouragement, where a vote taken otherwise than by acclamation is decidedly the exception, but which yet affords a genuine expression of public feeling, and where a vote contrary to the popular will could not possibly be carried. Within the Hellenic world the Homeric *Agorê* went on in the Military Assembly of the Macedonians, where Alexander and a few chiefs have most of the talk, where we do not read of any divisions or tellers, but where the mass of the army still know how to express a real will of their own, and where, if they sometimes condemned, they sometimes also acquitted, those whom their King and demigod denounced to them as traitors. The Homeric Assembly is in everything a youthful institution; it shares the nature of all youthful institutions; it is imperfect, but it is a reality as far as it goes. The early institutions of a nation may fail of fully carrying out their ends, but there is no make-belief as to what those ends are. We may well believe that the Old-English Witenagemót was an imperfect way of expressing public opinion; the King and a few great Earls had doubtless most of the talk; and to cry, 'Nay, nay,' instead of 'Yea, yea,' was most likely a rare and extreme measure. But we may be sure that the spirit of the thing was exactly opposite to the spirit which has brought about nearly the same external phænomena in Louis Napoleon's Legislative Assembly. There is all the difference in the world between an Assembly which dares not oppose and an Assembly which has not yet formed the wish to oppose. In the one case it is the relation of slaves to their master, in the other it is that of children to their father. Mr. Gladstone remarks of the Homeric *Agorê*, as Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton does of the English Witenagemót, that in both we find that public speaking is a real instrument of public policy; and, wherever this is so, they both most truly argue that the real essence of liberty is there. Odysseus and Godwine could sway assemblies of men by the force of eloquence. We need no further argument to show that the assemblies which they addressed were assemblies of freemen.

Of the sections 'Ilios' and 'Aoidos,' some of the most important parts, those namely which relate to the characters of the poems, run closely into one another. The latter part of 'Aoidos' consists of articles reprinted from the Quarterly Review. We do not know in what order the different parts of Mr. Gladstone's book were written; but we find a certain amount of repetition in these two parts. This strikes us especially in the estimate of the characters of Paris—why not give him his Homeric name of Alexander,* and shut out Virgilian ideas altogether?—and of Argeian Helen. But this estimate is one of the very best things in Mr. Gladstone's book, and we can well afford to have it twice over. Mr. Gladstone nowhere shines more than in dealing with the persons of the Homeric tale, and in distinguishing the true Homeric conceptions from the perversions palmed off upon the world by Euripidês and Virgil. Of the whole dealing of Virgil with the Trojan story Mr. Gladstone has made a thoroughly withering exposure. A modern Roman could not be an old Achaian; the court-poet of Augustus could not rival the nature and simplicity of the singer of the Hellenic people; thus far the fault was that of the age and not of the man. But Virgil might have spared us his wilful perversions both of great matters and of small, alike of the character of Helen and of the comparative bigness of Simoeis and Skamandros. From the Cyclic poets down to Dryden and Racine, the whole world seems to have conspired to disfigure the glorious conceptions of Homer, to mar alike the unrivalled power and the incomparable delicacy of his touch. Odysseus, the wise and valiant, becomes a vulgar rogue; Achilleus sinks into a mere brutal soldier, far below the Homeric Aias; the brave, the generous, the affectionate Menelaos becomes a coward and a sophist. Æschylus alone seems to have kept some little reverence for the heroes and for him who drew them. He has given us an Agamemnôn who perhaps unduly

* The double name is curious. Homer does sometimes use the name Paris, but far more commonly that of Alexander. But the latter name gradually disappears in later writers.

surpasses the Agamemnôn of Homer; but in return even he seems not to have been able to touch without defilement the Homeric conception of Achilleus and Patroklos.* But the wretched treatment which the Homeric characters have undergone rises to its height in the ruthless way in which later writers have marred and defiled the masterpiece even of Homer's art, the picture of the Homeric Helen. Even Colonel Mure, who has done so much for Homer and the Homeric personages, here fails us; it has been reserved for Mr. Gladstone to set once more before us the Helen of Homer in all her beauty. The Helen of the later poets is a vain and wanton adulteress; the *Trojæ et patriæ communis Erinnys*, who can at best only excuse herself by laying her own sins to the charge of Fate and Aphroditê. Not such is the Helen of the Iliad and the Odyssey. There the crime of Alexander is not seduction, but high-handed violence; he is not the corrupter, but the ravisher: Helen is not the willing partner, but the passive victim; her fault is at most a half-reluctant submission after the fact. No sign of passion or affection does she show for her worthless lover; her heart yearns for Greece and Menelaos, for her forsaken home and her worse than motherless child. The Helen of Homer is, in fact, the most perfect, perhaps indeed the only, example of humility and repentance of the Christian type conceived by a heathen writer. Every word on which a worse view of her conduct might be founded is put into her own mouth; like a true penitent, she despises herself, and paints her own doings in colours in which no one else would have dared to paint them. Readers who carry about with them the vulgar post-Homeric conception have always stumbled at the Helen of the Odyssey, restored to her hearth and home and to her husband's love, as though she had never gone in the well-

* The strange fragments of the Μυρμίδονες certainly show that Æschylus was guilty of degrading the relations of Achilleus and Patroklos, just as the calumnious pen of Niebuhr has degraded the equally beautiful picture of Alexander and Hephaistiôn.

oared ships, nor come to the citadel of Troy.* But on the Helen of the Iliad, far more sinned against than sinning, the Helen of the Odyssey follows as the natural afterpiece. All that Mr. Gladstone has said on these two characters of Paris and Helen is worthy the deepest attention of every Homeric student. Had he written nothing else, this alone would be enough to place him in the first rank of Homeric critics.†

The whole section 'Ilios' is highly interesting and ingenious; but some things, as usual, strike us as being overdone. It is here, above all, that Mr. Gladstone treats the Iliad too much as a chronicle in verse. He admits indeed in words that the question of historical truth and falsehood is not altogether to the point; that, in any case, it is the part of the critic distinctly to find out what was the conception in the mind of the poet, whether that conception was historical or fictitious. He admits also in words that, whether as chronicler or as poet, Homer was not bound to give us the same minute picture of the life of Troy as he gives us of the life of Greece. But in practice Mr. Gladstone hardly carries out his theory. His exaggerated notion of the historical trustworthiness of the Iliad leads him to seek for historical signs of Trojan manners and institutions in every single word of the poet which can anyhow be pressed into such a service. Now we have admitted that Homer is a real historical witness, at least for a real state of things in Greece. But, even if we fully admitted the historical reality of the Trojan War, we could not admit

* οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος·
οὐ γὰρ ἔβας ἐν νηυσὶν ἐϋσέλμοις,
οὐδ' ἵκεο πέργαμα Τροίας.—Stesichoros' Palinodia.

† While Mr. Gladstone's version of Paris and Helen is undoubtedly that which best harmonizes the various statements in different parts of the Iliad and Odyssey, we still think that he builds rather too much upon the mere use of the word ἁρπάζω. Surely, as far as we understand such matters, the two processes run so much into one another that ἁρπάζω might be not inaccurately used of a case in which the element of seduction overcame the element of violence. And what says Herodotus of this whole class of legends? δῆλα γὰρ δὴ ὅτι, εἰ μὴ αὐταὶ ἐβουλέατο, οὐκ ἂν ἡρπάζοντο. i. 4.

Homer as an equally trustworthy authority for Trojan affairs. He would assuredly describe the Trojans after the pattern of the Greeks of his own day, or at the utmost—though even this is supposing a rather unlikely striving after accuracy—after the pattern of the inhabitants of the Troad in his own day. But we have no right to assume that either of these pictures would be an accurate representation of the historical Trojans, if historical Trojans there ever were. Again, we have said that in no case was Homer bound to be equally minute in his descriptions of Greek and of Trojan affairs. Negative arguments therefore prove very little. Homer's silence as to the existence of any Greek practice in Troy does not prove that he purposely meant to imply that it did not exist there. But hence the opposite line of argument gains increased strength. Any positive account of things Trojan is of great importance. And here the minute researches of Mr. Gladstone have brought out some very curious points. Everybody has doubtless observed that Priam lives in clearly marked polygamy, while the Greek princes at most practise concubinage. But everybody probably has not observed that, while in Greece the women attract the love of the Gods, in Troy the men attract the love of the Goddesses. Again, in Greece we hear little or nothing about priests, but a great deal about prophets. In Troy, considering our slender means of knowledge, the priests cut a great figure. These touches cannot be accidental. They may be genuine elder traditions; they may be the result of Homer's own observations on that later Dardanian dynasty for whose historical being we hold him to be a trustworthy witness. Nor can it be without some reason or other that Homer always dwells with such delight upon the good and valiant Lykians. They are clearly the only people on the hostile side whom he looked upon as worthy foes of his own countrymen. We do not know whether it is to the purpose or not, but it certainly is a curious coincidence that, while Achaian and Lykian are the two names in Europe and in Asia which Homer most delights to honour, so it was in the

Achaian and Lykian Confederations that the greatest share of freedom and good government lingered on till all was engulfed in the universal dominion of Rome.*

Homer's general picture of his Trojans as compared with his Greeks is very skilfully commented on by Mr. Gladstone. The Trojans are a kindred people; they are not widely distinguished from the Greeks in manners, religion, or polity. They are not *βαρβαρόφωνοι*; they are not *ἀλλόθροοι ἄνθρωποι*. No such broad line parts them off from the Hellenic world as that which parts off the savage Kyklôpes and Laistrygonians, or even the wholly foreign Egyptians and Phœnicians. But, though they are clearly a kindred people, they are no less clearly in every way, as men and as soldiers, an inferior people. But they are not too greatly inferior. They are inferior enough to be beaten; but they are not so inferior as to make it inglorious to beat them. This train of ideas, in which Homer's patriotism plainly rejoiced, is very minutely and ingeniously worked out by Mr. Gladstone.

So far as we can conjecture, the picture thus given by Homer may be supposed fairly to represent the facts of the case. If by the Trojans we understand the race whom the Æolian and Ionian colonists found in possession of the western coast of Asia, one can hardly doubt their near kindred with the Greeks. Everything tends to show that they belonged to that race, call it Pelasgian or what we will, of which the Hellenic nation formed the most illustrious member. The little we find recorded of them in authentic history—the local nomenclature of their country, which corresponds in so striking a way with that of the other side of the Ægæan—the ease with which the whole land was hellenized,—all point to them, along with Sikels, Epeirots, and Macedonians, as a kind of undeveloped Greeks, capable of receiving full Hellenic culture, though not capable of developing it for themselves. This exactly falls in with

* [This parallel came home to me again in the History of Federal Government, i. 216.]

the true Homeric portrait of the Trojans. But here again the true Homeric portrait must be carefully distinguished from the later shapes which it puts on in the hands of Sophoklês, Euripidês, and Virgil. In their hands every touch of Homer's picture is lost. Achaians and Trojans are broadly distinguished as Ἕλληνες and *βάρβαροι*. The subjects of Priam are degraded into Phrygians. The Achaians sometimes figure as Dorians, sometimes as Pelasgians. Homer is, on all these points, probable and self-consistent. Euripidês treats them in a spirit about as historical as when he makes the supposed wantonness of Argeian Helen the natural result of the scanty clothing which the discipline of Lykourgos allotted to the virgins of Dorian Sparta.

Not the least, to our mind, of Mr. Gladstone's services to Homer is his defence of the ninth book of the Iliad. In his section 'Aoidos' he has thoroughly overthrown Mr. Grote's idea of an Achilleid developed into an Iliad, and he has fully vindicated the plot of the poem in its received form. Mr. Grote thinks the ninth book inconsistent with much that follows; all possible satisfaction has been offered Achilleus, and yet in later books he still wishes to see Agamemnôn and the Greeks humbled and suppliant before him. Mr. Gladstone answers that in the ninth book no real satisfaction is offered to the wounded spirit of the hero. Agamemnôn strives, as it were, to buy his return by costly offers, which, in plain truth, are simply bribes. But there is no real atonement, no humiliation, no confession of error. There is therefore no real compensation to the injured honour of Achilleus. The wrath of the hero was not to be appeased by gifts, not even by the restitution of Brisêis. He need not have given her up, and he refuses to receive her again. Such a feeling as the wrath of Achilleus was not to be bought off by gifts, even if it might have been appeased by repentance. Homer gives it a far grander and more characteristic end; it is neither bought off nor appeased; it is swallowed up in a still mightier passion. In the grief of

Achilleus for the loss of Patroklos, in his longing to avenge him, no room is left in his heart for memory of the wrong done to him by Agamemnôn. In this view, the ninth book, the record of the fruitless embassy, is altogether needful to the developement of the story. And, as part of the picture of Achilleus, as a specimen of the grand old heroic rhetoric, no part of the poems surpasses it. Those few words of sarcasm, which Mr. Gladstone is so fond of quoting as the climax of Achilleus' oratory,

> ἦ μοῦνοι φιλέουσ' ἀλόχους μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
> Ἀτρεΐδαι;

might alone have made the fortune of a poet or a rhetorician.

We thus part from these noble volumes, worthy alike of their author and of their subject, the freshest and most genial tribute to ancient literature which has been paid even by an age rich in such offerings. Mr. Gladstone will not rate our admiration the less because we have plainly stated our wide dissent from some important parts of his book. He has, we think, dealt with ethnology without the needful training, and he has treated mythology from a wholly false point of view. But he has done such justice to Homer and his age as Homer has never received out of his own land. He has vindicated the true position of the greatest of poets; he has cleared his tale and its actors from the misrepresentations of ages. With an ordinary writer, we might end with the almost conventional compliment, that we trust we are not meeting him for the last time. With Mr. Gladstone we feel that there is truth in the words with which he winds up his Homeric labours, words which the records of the present parliamentary session have shown to be no empty boast:

'Nemesis must not find me,

> ἦ νῦν δηθύνοντ', ἦ ὕστερον αὖθις ἰόντα.

To pass from the study of Homer to the ordinary business of the world, is to step out of a palace of enchantment into the cold gray light of a polar day. But the spells in which this sorcerer deals have no affinity with that drug from

Egypt, which drowns the spirit in effeminate indifference : rather they are like the φάρμακον ἐσθλὸν, the remedial specific, which, freshening the understanding by contact with the truth and strength of nature, should both improve its vigilance against deceit and danger, and increase its vigour and resolution for the discharge of duty.' *

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* [It must be remembered that this appeared in July, 1858. In the February of that year the famous 'Conspiracy Bill' was brought in. While Lord Palmerston was cowering before the threats of French Colonels and proposing to change the laws of England at the bidding of a French Tyrant, Mr. Gladstone, along with Mr. Milner Gibson and Lord John Russell, was among those who stood up for the independence of his country. His speech on February 19th was a noble exposure of the way in which Lord Palmerston and his ally Lord Clarendon had cringed to Buonaparte whenever they had a chance. So, later in the year, after the article was published, Mr. Gladstone was striving for the good of the Greek nation in the Ionian Islands, while Lords Palmerston and Clarendon were the guests of the Tyrant at Compiègne, at the very moment when he was persecuting the Count of Montalembert for no crime but that of good will to England.]

# III.

## THE HISTORIANS OF ATHENS.*

It is indeed a wonderful thought, that Herodotus and Thucydides were contemporary writers, perhaps not so widely removed in age as is commonly the case between father and son. As Colonel Mure remarks, an interval of centuries would seem to have passed away between them. The question of their comparative merit can hardly arise; the two writers are wholly different in kind. It would be as easy to compare an old Greek, a writer of the middle ages, and a writer of our own time. Herodotus is a Greek of the fifth century before Christ. His archaic tastes indeed make him rather a Greek of a century earlier. Xenophôn is a Greek of the following age, a far less favourable specimen of his age than Herodotus is of his. But Thucydides belongs to no age or country; he is the historian of our common humanity, the teacher of abstract political wisdom. Herodotus is hardly a political writer at all; the few political comments which he makes are indeed always true and generous; but they are put forth with an amiable simplicity which comes near to the nature of a truism. When he infers from the growth of Athens after she had driven out her Tyrants that 'freedom is a noble thing,'† the comment reads like the remark of an intelligent child, or like the reflexion of an Oriental awakening to the realities of

* [This is part of an article which was originally headed 'Colonel Mure and the Attic Historians.' I have changed the title, because Herodotus, though not an 'Attic Historian,' may be fairly called a 'Historian of Athens.' I have also left out all the minute criticisms on Colonel Mure's book, and I have worked in some matter which at first formed part of the next Essay, but which seemed more in place here.]

† *ἡ ἰσηγορίη ὡς ἔστι χρῆμα σπουδαῖον.* Herod. v. 78.

European life. Xenophôn writes from the worst inspiration of local and temporary party-spirit. He writes history, not to record facts or to deduce lessons, but, at whatever cost of truth and fairness, to set up Agêsilaos and to run down the Thebans. But Thucydides, living at a time when the political life of man had as yet hardly been spread over two ages, seems to have drawn from that short time the lessons of whole millenniums. From the narrow field which lay before his eyes he could draw a political teaching which should apply to every age, race, and country. There is hardly a problem in the science of government which the statesman will not find, if not solved, at any rate handled, in the pages of this universal master. The political experience of Thucydides could have set before him only two sets of phænomena—the small city-commonwealth and the vast barbaric kingdom. But we feel that he would have been equally at home under any other state of things. If we could think of Herodotus or Xenophôn as suddenly set down in the feudal France or Germany of a past age, in the constitutional England or the federal America of our own time, everything would doubtless bear in their eyes the air of an insoluble problem. But we can imagine that Thucydides would at once behold real analogy through seeming unlikeness, and would see that phænomena so unlike anything within his own experience were merely fresh instances of the general principles which he had learned from another state of things. No truth seems harder for men to receive than the doctrine that history is really one whole; that 'ancient,' 'modern,' 'mediæval,' mark convenient halting-places and nothing more; that man's political nature is essentially the same under every change of outward circumstances. But there is no witness which more overwhelmingly confirms its truth than the fact that the political wisdom of all ages was thus forestalled by the citizen of a small commonwealth living twenty-three centuries ago.

Neither Herodotus nor Thucydides were men of their own age. The mind of Herodotus clearly lived in past times. The stern truth of chronology tells us that he was contemporary

with Periklês, perhaps with Alkibiadês. But no one thinks of the fact while reading his enchanting chronicle. While so engaged, we fully believe him to have been an eye-witness of Marathôn and Salamis. We are indeed hardly clear whether he may not have stood by at the return of Peisistratos, or even have been an unseen looker-on in the sleeping-chamber of Kandaulês. Nothing connects him with his own age, except a few brief, sparing, sometimes doubtful, references to events later than his main subject. The genial traveller of Halikarnassos loved to gather together, to set in dramatic order, to garnish here and there with religious or moral sentiment, the antiquities and legends of every age and country except the Greece of the Peloponnesian War. His own age, we may believe, he tried to forget; a more dignified form of love for the past than that which shows itself in querulous longings after what is gone and petulant sarcasms upon what is present. Herodotus is the liberal, well-informed, antiquary and scholar, who lives out of his own age; he is not the disappointed politician, who lives in it only to carp at everything around or beyond him.

In Xenophôn, on the other hand, notwithstanding much that is personally attractive and estimable, we see, as a political writer, only the man of a particular time and place in the smallest and most malignant form of that character. Herodotus lived in the past, Thucydides lived for the future; Xenophôn reflects only the petty passions of the moment. He writes not like a historian, whether antiquarian or political, but like a petulant journalist who has to decry the troublesome greatness of an opposite party. Yet even his writings may indirectly lead us to the same lesson as those of Thucydides. One teaches us that much of our modern wisdom might be reached by a powerful mind while human thought was yet in its infancy. The other shows that, if old Greece could forestall modern political science, it could also forestall the pettiest forms of modern political rivalry. Thucydides, without Xenophôn, might make us place the ideal Greek historian at a superhuman height above us. Xenophôn, without Thucydides,

might lead us to drag him down to the level of a very inferior modern pamphleteer. But the two together teach the same lesson, the lesson that man is essentially the same everywhere, that an old Greek was a being of like passions with a modern Englishman, that each could show, in the shapes belonging to their several ages, alike the highest and the lowest phases of our common nature.

In fact, no one can thoroughly know what Thucydides is, if he does not make use of Xenophôn as a foil. Without comparing the two, we might be led to think that Thucydidean dignity and impartiality was an easy commonplace quality which did not entitle its possessor to any special honour. When we turn to the Hellenics, we at once see how great were the temptations to a contrary course which surrounded a Greek who wrote the history of his own time. How many opportunities must Thucydides have had, how many must he have cast aside, for colouring, omitting, exaggerating. How easy was it to pass by the good or the bad deeds of one or the other party. How hard a task to keep the bitter revengeful spirit of the exile from showing itself in every page. Thucydides, after all, was a man and a Greek, an Athenian of oligarchic tendencies banished under the democracy. The wonderful thing is that such a position did not warp his statements in every page. Yet all that has ever been alleged against him is that once, or at most twice, in his history he has shown that he could not deal with perfect fairness between himself and a bitter personal and political enemy. That Thucydides does bear hard upon Kleôn (and upon Hyperbolos) is to our mind perfectly clear. His way of speaking of them is all the more marked from its standing out in such utter contrast to his way of speaking of people in general. Nothing is more striking throughout his history than the way in which he commonly abstains from direct censure of any one. Yet he never brings in Kleôn's name without some unfavourable insinuation or some expression of disparagement. We may freely allow that for once the impartiality of Thucydides failed him. But, even when it did so, we have no reason to doubt the thorough honesty

of his narrative. It bears about it in fact one most convincing proof of honesty; the story, as he tells it, does not bear out the epithets which he applies to the actors in it. But, after all, what does the utmost that can be made out against him amount to? That he once pronounces a judgement which his own narrative does not bear out: in short that, though he never ceased to be a truthful witness, he had not reached that more than human height of virtue which enables a man to be a perfectly fair judge in his own cause. Think of this one flaw, and compare it with the moral state of the man who could describe the Theban revolution without bringing in the name of Pelopidas; who, when recording at large the history of his own times, could hold forth at impertinent length on the smallest doings of his Spartan hero, and deliberately leave out all mention of the deliverance of Messênia and the foundation of Megalopolis. Thucydides himself was not absolutely perfect; but perhaps no other actor in important events ever told them with so great an amount of impartiality. In Xenophôn we have to brand, not merely an unpardonable degree of weakness and passion, but sheer want of common honesty, a deliberate breach of the first moral laws of the historian's calling.

But the greatness of Thucydides is, after all, of a somewhat cold and unattractive character. He does not, like many other writers, draw us near to himself personally. What reader of Herodotus does not long for a talk face to face with the genial and delightful old traveller, who had been everywhere and had seen everything—who could tell you the founder of every city and the architect of every temple—who could recite oracles and legends from the beginnings of things to his own day, and who could season all with a simple moral and political commentary, not the less acceptable for being a little commonplace? What would one not give for the chance of asking why it was, after all, that the Scythians blinded their slaves, or of finding out, in some unguarded moment, in honour of what deity the Egyptians submitted themselves to the discipline? Xenophôn again would evidently not

have been the less agreeable a companion on account of his unpatriotic heresies and his historical unfairness. If he was a bitter enemy and an unscrupulous partizan, his very faults arose from carrying into excess the amiable character of a zealous friend. The pupil of Sôkratês could not help being unfair to the government by which his master was condemned; the officer of Agêsilaos could not mete out common justice to those pestilent Thebans by whom all the schemes of Agêsilaos were brought to nought. But Thucydides awakens no feelings of the kind. We might have highly esteemed the privilege of sitting at his feet as a lecturer; but we should hardly have been very eager for his company in our lighter moments. Genial simplicity, hearty and unconscious humour, are, after all, more attractive than the stern perfection of wisdom; a little superstition and a little party-spirit, if they render a man less admirable, do not always make him less agreeable. Impartiality is a rare and divine quality; but a little human weakness sometimes commends itself more to frail mortals. There is something lofty in the position of a man who records the worst deeds of Athenian and Lacedæmonian alike, as a simple matter of business, without a word of concealment, palliation, or rebuke for either. But we feel quite sure that Herodotus would have told us that the massacre of Plataia and the massacre of Mêlos were each of them a *πρῆγμα οὐχ ὅσιον*. We suspect that Xenophôn would have been so ashamed of the evil deed of that side on which his own feelings might be enlisted that he would not have set down both crimes in his history. But we get a little puzzled as to the moral condition of the man who minutely dissects the intellectual and political characters of Themistoklês and Periklês without a word of moral praise or dispraise of either. Our perplexity grows when we find the historian recording the treachery of Pachês towards Hippias without a word of comment.* It grows yet more when we find him honestly recording the assassinations in which Antiphôn was at least

* Thucydides iii. 54.

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an accomplice, and yet pronouncing this same Antiphôn to have been inferior to no Athenian of his day—Konôn and Thrasyboulos among them,—not only in ability but in virtue.* Herodotus would have lifted up his hands in pious horror; Xenophôn would either have shirked so unpleasant a subject, or would at least have found out some ingenious sophism to cloak the crime Then again, human nature craves for something like religion, and it does not always kick at a little superstition. We do not think the worse of Herodotus, Xenophôn, Pausanias, and Arrian for believing in oracles, visions, and the whole art and mystery of divination. It is perhaps very admirable, but it is not altogether amiable, in Thucydides to have got so far in advance of his age as to make it pretty certain that he believed in nothing of the kind, and to leave it by no means clear whether he believed in any Gods at all. Finally, we cannot forget, possibly even a contemporary Greek could not forget, how easy, how pleasant, it is to read Herodotus and Xenophôn, how very hard it often is to read Thucydides. We admire, but we cannot bring ourselves to love, the man who has clothed the words of wisdom with a veil so hard to uplift. We are sometimes tempted to prefer a teaching less profound in substance, but more conformable to the ordinary laws of human and Hellenic grammar. There is no denying that a speech of Thucydides is far more profitable than one of Xenophôn, or even than one of Herodotus. But there are times of weakness when we prefer pleasure to profit,—the ἡδύ to the χρήσιμον,—times when, even in spite of the repeated exhortations of Periklês to prefer deeds to words, we still for a moment prefer the ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα even to the κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί.

In fact, the wonderful way in which Thucydides soars intellectually over the men of his own age, and indeed of any age, while it makes his history the eternal treasure-house of political wisdom, makes him, in some incidental points, less

* Thuc. viii. c. 68. Ἀντιφῶν, ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναίων τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀρετῇ οὐδενὸς ὕστερος, κ.τ.λ., where see Dr. Arnold's note.

instructive than a very inferior writer might have been, as the immediate chronicler of his own particular age. Colonel Mure truly remarks that the Greek historians commonly looked on the internal politics of the several states as something which did not come within their province. A knowledge of them is taken for granted in a well-informed Greek reader. The historian, for the most part, deals only with the cities in their international—in what, as Mr. Grote suggests, might more properly be called their *interpolitical*, aspect. It is only when internal revolutions bear on foreign affairs that they are set down at any length. Thus Thucydides records the Athenian revolutions of the year 411 in full detail, because the part which was taken in them by the fleet at Samos brings them within the immediate sphere of his military narrative. But in his Summary he does not give a line to the constitutional changes introduced by Aristeidês, Ephialtês, and Periklês, though he records military and diplomatic events which were certainly not of greater importance. Kleôn, Nikias, Alkibiadês, are brought in only when they begin to have an influence on foreign affairs. Of the assaults made on Periklês by Kleôn, of the demagogues who arose for a short space in the time between the death of the one and the confirmed influence of the other, Thucydides tells us not a word. Still less, as Colonel Mure observes, does he tell us anything directly as to the literary, artistic, and philosophic being of Athens in her greatest splendour. We should never have learned from him that Æschylus, Euripidês, Pheidias, or Anaxagoras ever lived. From Thucydides alone we should never have found out that the Sophoklês who figures as an admiral in the Samian war was at least not less illustrious as the author of the Œdipus and the Electra. Had Thucydides lived to tell the tale of Arginousai, we may well doubt whether the name of Sôkratês would have been found in his report of the great debate on the amendment of Eurytolemos. One might have expected that the enemy of Kleôn would have looked with some sympathy on the author of the Knights; but the name of Aristophanês is nowhere

found in the history of the Peloponnesian War. Even in dealing with Periklês, his great artistic works appear only in the melancholy position of items in a budget. Even the pictures of the heroes of his narrative are in a manner imperfect, because they appear as beings wholly political and military. We see in all his greatness the Periklês who guided the democracy through the horrors of war and pestilence. But we hear nothing of the lover of Aspasia, of the founder of the Parthenôn, nothing even of the reformer who levelled the last relics of oligarchy, and placed the popular tribunal in the room of the venerable Senate on the hill of Arês.

On all these points we should doubtless have learned much more from either the earlier or the later historian. Had Herodotus deigned to record the events of his own age, his very love of genial gossip would have led him to tell us a great deal on which Thucydides keeps a dead silence, and which we are driven to pick up secondhand from Plutarch and other inferior writers. Herodotus may, as Mr. Grote has shown, not have understood the full depth and meaning of the democratic changes of Kleisthenês. But he has at least recorded their outward forms, while Thucydides has not done even thus much by those further changes which brought the work of Kleisthenês to completion. We can hardly fancy that the antiquary who was so curious about the temples of the Samian Hêrê and the Egyptian Ammôn could have been altogether blind to the pile reared under his own eye to Athênê of the Akropolis. He who has recorded the innovations made by Kleisthenês of Sikyôn in the choric ritual of his own city could hardly have listened unconcerned to the strains which told the glories of Kolônos, or to those in which the overwhelming burst of satire was hurled upon the head of the devoted Paphlagonian. Still less can we fancy the prose narrator of the fight of Salamis listening, without at least a generous rivalry, to the tale of defeat as told in the palace of Susa, or to the picture of the glories of Persia under the sway of that Darius who, in his own tale, seems less divine and invincible. Thucydides either cared for none of these

things, or he unluckily thought them 'beneath the dignity of history.' If the old Halikarnassian could but have been brought to deal with things of his own time, we feel sure that his less exalted standard would have found room for an enchanting picture of the social and artistic, as well as of the political, aspect of Athens in the days of her glory.

And as with Herodotus, so, in another way, with Xenophôn. The smaller historian has fittingly allotted to him the smaller hero. But Xenophôn gives us a far more vivid picture of Agêsilaos than Thucydides gives us of Periklês. In the one we simply admire the statesman, in the other we are brought into daily intercourse with the man. And again the tendency to personal gossip incidentally helps us to valuable political knowledge. We doubt whether Thucydides would have enlightened us as to the singular and discreditable means by which Sphodrias escaped the punishment of his unprovoked and treacherous inroad into Attica. Xenophôn, in his blind zeal for his hero, lets us behind the curtain, and thereby shows us what strange causes might warp the course of justice amid the secret workings of an oligarchy, and how much personal influence lay within the reach of a King who kept hardly a shadow of constitutional power. Again, while we reverence the set speeches of Thucydides for the deep teaching which they contain, we cannot but feel that the shorter and livelier addresses and rejoinders preserved or invented by Xenophôn give us a truer picture of the real tone of a debate in a Greek assembly. And though a critical judgement may go along with Colonel Mure in condemning Xenophôn's profusion of small dialogue and petty personal anecdote, we cannot, at this distance of time, regret anything which helps to give us a more perfect picture of the manner and tone of feeling of an age from the hand of a contemporary and an actor.

One word more as to Thucydides' estimate of Kleôn. We have said that all that has ever been alleged against Thucydides is, that he has allowed personal feelings to colour his inferences from facts, while it is not even suggested that he has reported the facts inaccurately. Because we owe so much to

Thucydides, people commonly leap to the conclusion that his banishment by the Athenian people must have been unjust. It was Mr. Grote who dared for the first time to hint that his own narrative of his command at Amphipolis and Eiôn gave no ground for arraigning the judgement of his countrymen. Kleôn again was a personal and political enemy of Thucydides; he is well nigh the only person in speaking of whom the historian deserts his usual unimpassioned dignity Mr. Grote was bold enough to hint that the historian's prejudice had coloured, not indeed his narrative, but his commentary; and that his own statement of the case did not fully bear out his unfavourable judgement. Mr. Grote's case was that, when Amphipolis was threatened, the Athenian commander ought to have been nowhere but at Amphipolis; least of all should he have been at Thasos, which the land force of Brasidas did not and could not threaten. He is at the very least called on to show cause why he was anywhere else, and such cause he nowhere attempts to show. Colonel Mure went a step further than Mr. Grote, and hinted very broadly what the real cause was. Thucydides, as he himself tells us, was a mining proprietor in that part of the world. Colonel Mure ventures to say,

'May not this very fact, his extensive interest as a proprietor in that extremity of his province, furnish an explanation of his preference of Thasus to Amphipolis or Eion as his head-quarter? The centre of the Thracian mining district, where his own possessions were situated, was Scaptesylë, on the coast immediately opposite Thasus; and the principal town and port of that island was also the chief emporium of the mineral trade of Thrace. In the absence, therefore, of all other apparent motive for his being stationary in the extreme* north of his province, while Brasidas was conquering the prin-

* We must confess that we do not understand Colonel Mure's geography. How is Thasos the 'extreme north of his province' more than Amphipolis? Did Colonel Mure think that Amphipolis lay 'south' of Thasos? He says so directly in the page before. 'It (Thasos) lay as far from Amphipolis *to the north*, as the scene of the Spartan warrior's earliest successes from the same city to the south.' Now Akanthos, the city already won by Brasidas, certainly lies as nearly as possible due south of Amphipolis. The island of Thasos lies, not north, but south-east. The island, as a whole, is decidedly south of Amphipolis; the city of Thasos, in the extreme north of the island, is very nearly on the same parallel as Amphipolis, but still a little south of it.

cipal cities of its south and centre, it is not very uncharitable to suppose that the fault laid to his charge, and not without reason, was his having been more occupied with his own affairs than with his official duties, at a time when the latter had an imperative claim on his undivided attention.' (p. 40.)

Now as to Kleôn. Mr. Grote fully accepts Thucydides' narrative, both as to the scene in the Assembly, and as to the campaign at Pylos. He simply thinks that, for once, personal enmity has betrayed Thucydides into a comment which his own statement does not bear out. Thucydides says that a certain scheme was 'mad,' which his own narrative shows to have been quite feasible. Mr. Grote refuses to believe either the satires of Aristophanês or the invectives of Thucydides, because he holds that the facts, as reported by Thucydides himself, do not justify them. Aristophanês represents Kleôn as stealing away the well-earned prize from Dêmosthenês. Certainly no one would find this out from the fourth book of Thucydides. Aristophanês represents Kleôn as winning his influence over the people by the basest and most cringing flattery. Thucydides puts into his mouth a speech on the affair of Mitylênê, which counsels indeed a wicked line of policy, but which, of all speeches in the world, is the least like the speech of a flatterer of the people. In fact, it is a bitter invective against the people. Nothing that Dêmosthenês did say, nothing that Periklês can have said, could outdo the boldness of the censures which Kleon passed on his own hearers. The exact amount of historic reality which belongs to the Thucydidean orations is very doubtful, and it probably differs much in different cases. But we may be quite sure that Thucydides would not put into the mouth of Kleôn a speech more austere and dignified than became his character. And as for the general conduct of the much reviled demagogue, we may make an extract from Colonel Mure which is the more valuable because it is somewhat inconsistent with his general tone about the matter.

Another evidence of impartiality [on the part of Thucydides] is the circumstance, that while those authorities represent the whole career of the demagogue as one unmitigated course of folly or mischief, Thucydides gives him credit for a conduct in some of his undertakings not very easy to reconcile with the incapacity displayed in others. The apparent inconsistency implies

at least a disposition to award him such merit as he really possessed. In his campaign of Amphipolis, Cleon certainly figures in a contemptible light, both as a soldier and a general. But his other military operations are not represented as open to censure. Thucydides, indeed, withholds from him the merit of having made good his 'insane promise' to capture the Spartan garrison of Sphacteria. He describes Demosthenes as having already matured his measures for the success of that enterprise, and as the director-in-chief of their execution. But there is no hint of Cleon, as the honorary commander-in-chief on the occasion, having shown any want of capacity or courage. In the early part of his ensuing Thracian campaign, his operations are represented not only as successful, but as well planned and vigorously executed. He even, on one important occasion, outmanœuvred the formidable Brasidas, by whom he was afterwards defeated; and, by a curious coincidence, much in the mode in which Thucydides himself had been discomfitted not long before by the same able adversary.'

After all, what is the accusation against Thucydides? Simply, as we have already said, that though he has nowhere misstated facts, he has in one instance allowed political or personal pique to warp his judgement. All honour to the contemporary historian against whom this is the heaviest charge! Think of the temptations, not merely to a single false judgement, but to constant misrepresentation of fact, which beset every political chronicler; above all, those which must have beset a Greek of the days of the Peloponnesian War. Think, in a word, what Xenophôn was—what Thucydides might have been, and was not. We may well admit that Thucydides was prejudiced against Kleôn, and that he himself failed of his duty at Amphipolis, without taking away one jot from the sterling worth of his immortal history.

# IV.

## THE ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY.*

*A History of Greece.* By George Grote, Esq. Twelve Volumes. London, 1846–56.

Mr. Grote's great work is at last brought to an end. For ten years his massive octavos have been gathering upon our shelves, and they have won for themselves a place from which it is hard to fancy that they can ever be dislodged. Few reputations indeed seem to be less lasting than that which proclaims a man to be the great historian of times which have long since gone by. Hooke and Mitford have passed away: if Sir George Lewis is to be trusted, Niebuhr and Arnold ought to pass away after them. We therefore cannot positively affirm that Grote may not be to our grandchildren what Mitford is to ourselves. Yet the thought that it may be so is one very hard to take in. Mr. Grote has done so much, he has throughout shown so much real vigour and originality, he has thrown so much clear and practical light upon points which had been hitherto misunderstood, that, though we may conceive him being surpassed, we can hardly conceive him being wholly forgotten.

That one thoroughly good history need not wholly set aside another thoroughly good history of the same people, is very

* [The references to Mr. Grote's book were so thoroughly interwoven with the framework of this Essay that I have thought it better to leave it, like that on Mr. Gladstone's Homer, in its first shape of a review. Beside verbal improvements, I have only left out or modified a few passages of only temporary interest, and I have given the Essay a title of which I think that Mr. Grote would not have disapproved.]

clearly shown by the case of Mr. Grote himself. The publication of his history in no way sets aside the sterling work of Bishop Thirlwall. Each has its own use. The professed historical student cannot do without either. But there are doubtless many persons who have no special devotion to Grecian history, but who still wish to study its main outlines in something higher than a mere school-book. To such readers we should certainly recommend Thirlwall rather than Grote. The comparative shortness, the greater clearness and terseness of the narrative, the freedom from discussions and digressions, all join to make it far better fitted for such a purpose. But for the political thinker, who looks to Grecian history chiefly in its practical bearing, Mr. Grote's work is far better fitted. The one is the work of a scholar, an enlarged and practical scholar indeed, but still one in whom the character of the scholar is the primary one. The other is the work of a politician and man of business, a London banker, a Radical Member of Parliament, whose devotion to ancient history and literature forms the most illustrious confutation of the charges brought against such studies as being useless and unpractical. Till some one arises who can cast both alike into the shade, we trust that these two great writers will continue to be honoured side by side.* High indeed is the honour which each of them deserves from all who see in the history of ancient freedom no vain and lifeless inquiry into a state of things which is as though it had never been, but one of the most living and instructive pursuits for the ruler and the citizen. Still, of the two we must give the higher place to the more zealous and fervent champion of the parent state of justice and liberty, the great Democracy of Athens.

Mr. Grote's work is so vast, and it may be looked at from

* [At the risk of being thought behind the age, I must say that I do not look on the German work of Curtius as throwing either of them into the shade. I add, by way of Appendix to this Essay, some extracts from various notices of the earlier volumes of Curtius which I have contributed to the Saturday Review.]

so many different points of view, that it will be better to try to do justice to one only of its many aspects, and to give but a few words to the other parts of the work. Which aspect it is that we have chosen we have perhaps already made known. Mr. Grote is, to our mind, greatest as the historian of Athenian Democracy. It is therefore as the historian of Athenian Democracy that we intend specially to look at him. We choose this particular subject at once from its intrinsic interest, from the misrepresentations under which it has suffered, and from the masterly and original manner in which it has been dealt with by Mr. Grote. The common misrepresentations of the Athenian Democracy have to a great extent arisen from sheer ignorance of its real nature, combined with a prejudice against democratic government in general. But there is no doubt that, in popular conception also, the literary glory of Athens has been allowed to overshadow her political greatness. Now, in truth, the pre-eminence of Athens in literature, philosophy and art, was simply the natural result of her pre-eminence in freedom and good government. We have now to speak, not of the result, but of the cause, and of the cause more specially as dealt with by Mr. Grote. After some short general criticisms on his work as a whole, we shall go on to examine his conception of the origin, the greatness, and the fall of the most illustrious of commonwealths.

In point of mere style, Mr. Grote is not specially pleasing; but either he improves by practice as he goes on, or else his readers become reconciled to his manner. Certainly, from one cause or the other, we think him a better writer now than we did ten years ago. His style is diffuse and heavy; it often lacks both dignity and simplicity. In his anxiety to make his meaning plain from all points of view, he is like Macaulay. But nothing can be more unlike than the means by which the two historians go about to compass this praiseworthy end. Instead of epigrammatic sentences and brilliant antitheses, it is by dint of ponderous and parenthetical repetitions that Mr. Grote seeks to hinder any scrap of his meaning from escaping the reader. Yet his style is not

unpleasing when one is used to it, and it gives a favourable impression of Mr. Grote as a man. Writers who are clearly artificial, like Gibbon and Macaulay, we admire, but at the same time we rather distrust them. But the noble simplicity of Arnold was clearly not more natural to him than a wholly different style of writing is to Mr. Grote. We feel quite sure with both of them, while we do not feel quite sure with Gibbon and Macaulay, that neither of them ever sacrificed a single atom of truth to improve the turn of a period or to sharpen the poignancy of an epithet.

Mr. Grote indeed strikes us as an eminently conscientious writer. He is an avowed partizan, therein differing from the more than judicial coldness which Dr. Thirlwall shows through a large part of his work. His partizanship is moreover tinged with a certain love of paradox. It is a real delight to him to differ from every earlier writer. But both partizanship and love of paradox are kept within bounds, not only by scrupulous honesty, but by the calm and dignified tone which runs through the whole work. Mr. Grote's political views colour his judgements, but they in no way colour his statements. He always argues, and never assumes or insinuates. He always fully and fairly sets forth the whole evidence, and places elaborately before his reader the grounds of his own judgement. The pupil of Mr. Grote, though he should never see any other history, will never be surprised into an opinion; he always has full opportunity, if he be so disposed, of dissenting from the decisions of his teacher. And Mr. Grote is altogether free from the vice to which his somewhat aggressive and paradoxical position specially lays him open. He is painstaking and merciful towards all previous writers. He never condemns, he hardly even dissents, without telling us at full length why he condemns or dissents. Even Mitford,* at whom Dr. Thirlwall

* Mitford was a bad scholar, a bad historian, a bad writer of English. Yet we feel a lingering weakness for him. He was the first writer of any note who found out that Grecian history was a living thing with a practical bearing. We of course hold that he applied it the wrong way. He hated Dêmo-

sneers till we feel a reaction in his favour, is never set aside unheard. Mr. Grote stops to wonder at him, to argue with him, to prove, as well as to assert, that he is very much in the wrong. Everything that Mr. Grote does is serious and earnest. Twice perhaps in his volumes we think we can see his features relaxing into a stern smile. Mr. Grote loves a parallel both well and wisely. But when Iphikratês is coupled with Wellington and Blücher as 'having lent an honourable denomination to boots and shoes,'* we cannot ourselves keep down a slight tendency to laughter, one which we would fain justify by the hope that the historian himself intended to arouse it.

In fact, Mr. Grote's praiseworthy desire to be full and accurate on every point, and to give his reasons for everything, has sometimes led him astray. To his office as historian of Greece, he very needlessly adds the quite distinct functions of a commentator on the text of Thucydides. He is always filling up his pages with notes of frightful length and tediousness, proposing and elaborately defending new translations of particular passages. Now most of these digressions are by no means called for by his subject. Mr. Grote moreover is a great historian, but he is not a great Greek scholar. He understands the Greek language quite well enough to make excellent use of his Greek books. He does not understand it well enough to enter into elaborate discussions on minute grammatical points. By thus attempting a line

sthenês; we love and reverence him. But it was a great step to find out that Dêmosthenês could be the object of any human emotion. For the young student or for the general reader Mitford's History would be simply misleading; but it is quite worth reading by any one who wishes to look at Grecian history from every possible point of view.

* Vol. ix. p. 468. So in vol. vi. p. 174, speaking of the odd abodes to which the Athenians were driven during the Peloponnesian war, 'in sheds, cabins, tents, or even tubs,' he adds, 'Aristophanês, Equites, 789, *οἰκοῦντ' ἐν ταῖς πιθάκναισι κἀν γυπαρίοις καὶ πυργιδίοις*. The philosopher Diogenês, in taking up his abode in a tub, had thus examples in history to follow.' Surely Mr. Grote laughed over both the boots and the tub. We are not so clear whether he laughed when, describing the Scythian expedition of Darius (vol. iv. p. 361), he speaks of Mr. Kenrick as being 'among those who cannot swim the Dniester.'

which is not really his own, he has laid himself open to the puny and insolent attacks of men to whose small minds his real greatness is simply unintelligible. There is a story of King Philip trying to set a harper right after dinner, and receiving for answer, 'You ought to be ashamed if I did not know such things better than you.' * When a politician and historian like Mr. Grote wanders into the narrow field of verbal criticism, he might well have received an answer of the same kind from a man who could find nothing better to do with twenty years of his life than to devote them to the empirical study and teaching of Greek pronouns. If Mr. Grote, in the course of his great work, has now and then made a slip or given a judgement which cannot be maintained, we can only say, with Sir Archibald Alison, that such things will cease 'when human nature is other than it is, but not till then.' No man that ever wrote is surer and sounder than Bishop Thirlwall; but we have found inaccuracies even in him. Nay, more, in one or two places† we have found Mr. Grote himself in pieces of false construing which he makes the foundation of historical arguments. Yet it never came into our mind to write an impertinent pamphlet against either of them. Great men may now and then err; small men may now and then set them right: yet, after all, there is a certain decent respect owing from the small men to the great.

From the general character of Mr. Grote's style, it follows almost necessarily that he is greater in comment than in narrative. His narrative is always full and clear; but it is seldom graphic or eloquent. But he is ever on the watch for the moral and political teaching of every incident. Per-

* Plut. Apoph. Phil. 29. (Moralia, ii. 20. Tauchnitz.)

† Vol. v. p. 481, Mr. Grote's translation of *τὰ δὲ δικαστήρια μισθοφόρα κατέστησε Περικλῆς*, is quite untenable; but this passage we shall probably have to refer to again. In vol. iv. p. 145 (compare Thirlwall, vol. ii. p. 68) Mr. Grote is clearly wrong, and Dr. Thirlwall clearly right, in his translation of the passage from Herodotus.

In vol. ii. p. 585, vol. x. p. 463, vol xi. p. 681, we find Mr. Grote reviving, wholly or partially, interpretations of Mitford's which Dr. Thirlwall (vol. v. p. 200, vol. vi. p. 66 of the old edition; compare vol. vi. p. 103 of the new) had scornfully set aside.

haps he overdoes it in this way; but Grecian history has been so much misunderstood, and most of Mr. Grote's comments are so weighty, that it is quite a fault on the right side.

Mr. Grote divides his work into two portions of very unequal length—Legendary and Historical Greece. In the former he makes it his business to tell all the myths at full length; from his point of view, we really cannot understand why. To tell them fittingly as legends, as Dr. Arnold has done with the Roman stories, he does not even try, and it would certainly be quite out of his line to do so. And his code of historical belief expressly forbids all attempts to find historical truth in them, in the way which has been carried out by Niebuhr. Mr. Grote is not quite so strict in point of evidence as Sir George Lewis; but it is only with the first Olympiad, B.C. 776, that he sees anything like even the first glimpse of real history. Now we are quite as far as either Mr. Grote or Sir George Lewis from the old uncritical belief in poetic fables, which, if they contain any kernel of truth, hide it under such disguises that it can no longer be seen. But surely both of them cast aside one whole source of knowledge of a very different kind. It is clear that neither of them has the least turn for præ-historic or ethnological researches. They have hardly a word to tell us about the Pelasgians* or the Leleges. Speculations of this kind rest, they say, on no evidence. Sir George Lewis especially would seem to rank them almost below the legends of the poets. Certainly they rest on no contemporary written evidence; but surely they rest on an evidence of their own. That evidence is of the same kind as that which forms the groundwork of philology and of some branches of natural science—of geology, for instance, which is simply archæology before man. Moreover it sometimes happens, as in the case of the

* On the historical Pelasgians of Krestôn and Plakia Mr. Grote has one of his best notes, vol. ii. p. 351. He shows very clearly, against Dr. Thirlwall, that in the well-known passage of Herodotus χαρακτὴρ must be interpreted by βάρβαρος, not βάρβαρος by χαρακτήρ.

legendary greatness of Mykênê, that archæological and legendary evidence coincide so wonderfully as to leave no doubt that the legend has preserved the memory of a real state of things.*

Mr. Grote's chapters on Sparta, her gradual developement and her distinctive constitution, form a most valuable contribution to early Grecian history. He shows very clearly how thoroughly Argos was the leading state of Peloponnêsos in the early Doric times; how very slowly it was that Sparta rose to the post of honour; how obstinately Argos clung to the assertion of her ancient position, long after she had lost all means of practically enforcing it. Highly valuable also are the chapters which, at various stages of the work, are given to the fortunes of the Sicilian Greeks. In the prominence which Mr. Grote gives to them he agrees with Mitford, though no contrast can be greater than that which is shown in the treatment of the subject by the two writers. Dr. Thirlwall, somewhat unaccountably, takes very little notice of this important part of the Hellenic world.

The Homeric poems are another subject to which Mr. Grote gives much of his attention. His general philosophical remarks on the origin and growth of legend are among the profoundest things in his work; but in purely literary criticism he is hardly equal to Colonel Mure, His view is one which lies between the 'Wolfian hypothesis' of disjointed lays, and Colonel Mure's belief in the essential unity of both poems.† The Odyssey Mr. Grote looks on as an integral whole, the Iliad as a poem enlarged out of an earlier Achilleid. This view he very ably supports, but on the whole we incline to Colonel Mure. It is instructive indeed to contrast these two eminent men, to whom Grecian literature is so deeply indebted. Each is so well fitted for his own task; neither is quite safe when he handles the task of the other. The one has all the strength and depth of the political historian, the other the taste and acuteness of the refined literary critic.

* [See above p. 60. I have struck out a passage to the same effect as what I said there.]

† [This was written before the appearance of Mr. Gladstone's book.]

Sir George Lewis, Colonel Mure, and Mr. Grote, may all be classed together as illustrious examples of a love of learning kept on in the midst of busy life. Three public men,—one a distinguished son of Oxford, another brought up at a foreign University, a third without any academic training at all,—are all, among pursuits which do not commonly lead men to such researches, equally led to profound research into the literature and politics of distant times. No argument can be more overwhelming against those who gainsay the usefulness of such studies.

But we must hasten on to our real subject, the origin and working of the Athenian Democracy. What old Greece was to the rest of the contemporary world, Athens emphatically was to Greece itself. Every tendency which marked off the Greek from the Barbarian marked off, in its highest developement, the Athenian from every other Greek. The Athenian, in short, was the highest form of the Hellenic type. By nothing is the Greek more emphatically distinguished from every nation with which he came in contact during his best days, than by the presence of what Mr. Grote calls a 'constitutional morality.' Political liberty was grounded on a habit of fairly hearing both sides, and then deciding; it was understood that the minority should peaceably yield to the will of the greater number. This is a doctrine which was wholly unknown to the Persian or the Egyptian, who knew no choice but either blind submission to a master or open rebellion against him. But in every Greek city the theory was thoroughly well known, though it was by no means in every Greek city that the theory was fully or constantly carried out. It is in democratic Athens that we find the nearest approach, and that positively a very near approach, to its perfect fulfilment.

Old Greece, taking in under that name not only the original Hellas, but all the settlements of the Greek nation everywhere, was, we must always remember, a system of cities wholly independent of one another. It was moreover a system

which, during its best days, was co-extensive with its own civilized world. In ancient and in mediæval Italy, in mediæval and in modern Switzerland, a like system of what Mr. Grote calls 'town-autonomy,' has more or less largely prevailed. But it is in old Greece alone that the system is seen in its full perfection. The City was the highest and the lowest political unit which the Greek willingly acknowledged. He must have a city; a mere village was not enough for him: he did not want the wild independence of the mountaineer, but the settled legal freedom of the citizen. There must be an authority to obey, but of that authority he must himself form a part. But for such authority he did not willingly look beyond his own city; he had no mind to merge the full sovereignty of that city even in a federation, much less in an empire. The full and perfect sovereignty of each separate city formed the political ideal of the Greek mind. The less advanced members of the Hellenic race did not fully attain to the conception, because they did not fully attain to the perfection of Greek city-life. In later times Greece learned by bitter experience the need of closer union; and at last the Achaian League was the result. But among the most advanced Greeks in the best days of Greece the sovereignty of each city was the acknowledged political theory. If it was never fully carried out, it was only because every city had not physical resources to maintain its independence. But every city looked on perfect independence as its natural right; every city asserted its independence whenever it could; every city deemed itself wronged if it were hindered from so doing by superior force.

Now in the earliest times into which we can get any insight, this system of small separate communities formed the whole political world of which the Greek had any knowledge. In old Greece, above all, he never met, either as friend or foe, with any but a Greek neighbour. Even in the early colonies the Greek never came across any foreigner able to meet him on equal terms either of friendship or of hostility. In this state of things the bond between Greek and

Greek differed little from the bond between man and man. But the colonizing system first gave birth to a feeling which the rise of great Barbarian states strengthened, a feeling that the Greek race did not stand alone in the world. In Thrace, in Asia, in Sicily, the Greek learned the existence of the Barbarian; and as Lydia, Carthage, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome arose one after the other, he learned that the friendship or enmity of the Barbarian might be a matter of moment to the Greek. But he learned at the same time that the Greek could boast of something whereby to distinguish himself from the Barbarian. He learned that, over and above the independent political being of the several Grecian cities, there was a higher national being in which every Greek could claim a share. From Spain to the Tauric Chersonêsos, every Greek shared a common language, a common religion, common political and intellectual tendencies. The Greek of the Iberian Zakynthos and the Greek of the Borysthenic Olbia might meet and contend in those games, by the banks of the Alpheios or beneath the crags of Delphi, from which even the Macedonian and the Thesprotian were hopelessly shut out. He began to feel that his brother Greek might by chance be an enemy, but that he was still in himself a countryman. He felt that even to a hostile Greek he stood in a relation in which he did not stand to the outside foreigner, whose language, manners, and worship were altogether strange to him. Thus the feeling of 'separate town-autonomy' began to be somewhat modified by the wider feeling of 'Pan-hellenic obligation.' As Mr. Grote several times suggests, the proper union and harmony of these two tendencies would have led to the establishment of a Federal Government. No such Federal Government could have taken in the whole Hellenic race; but a Federal Government might easily have taken in all the Grecian cities around the Ægæan. It might have taken in all Greeks from Epidamnos to Sinôpê, a range nearly answering to the extent of the Greek race at the present day. But the only really effective Federal Government which Greece ever saw arose too late to do the work, and

never spread to any purpose beyond the bounds of Peloponnêsos. As it was, the natural inclination of all communities to extend their dominion, whether rightfully or wrongfully, too often clashed alike with town-autonomy and with Pan-hellenic patriotism. At no time of their history did Greeks scruple to hold dominion over other Greeks. And as soon as they had the means, they did not scruple to win and to uphold such dominion by the help either of barbaric steel or of barbaric gold.

Now Athens stands out prominently as the highest developement of all these tendencies. She is the most illustrious example alike of the single autonomous city, of the Pan-hellenic leader against the Barbarian, and of the Greek state bearing rule over other Greeks. In all these characters she has been thoughtfully examined and clearly described by the great historian with whom we are dealing. In the sketch of the Athenian Democracy which we are now about to attempt, our readers will understand that we are chiefly following Mr. Grote, and that we mean to set the seal of our full agreement to his general views,—of course not pledging ourselves to every minute detail,—whenever we do not stop formally to argue against them.

As a single autonomous city, Athens was in two ways the greatest in Greece. No other single city could boast of so great a number of citizens; in no other did those citizens so directly and thoroughly hold the government of their own city. A glance at the map of Greece will show that Attica was far larger than the territory of any other single city. Sparta of course ruled over a far larger extent of country; but that was because Sparta held the sovereignty over many other cities, which were thereby thrust down to the rank of subjects. Attica was nearly as large as Bœotia; but while Bœotia formed an ill-contrived and inharmonious federation, Attica formed one indivisible body-politic. Attica was in fact about as large a territory as could, according to Greek notions, form one indivisible body-politic. Had the land been much larger, each qualified citizen could no longer have exercised a personal share in the government. This happy position was

owing to an event which comes to us in the form of legend, but which is supported by so great a weight of probability that we may fairly set it down as a historical fact. That Attica once contained twelve independent cities, and that they were led to give up their separate political life and to be merged into the one city of Athens, we may undoubtedly believe. But as to the exact date of the change, whether it took place at once or gradually,—whether some cities kept their independence longer than others,—whether their inhabitants received the full Athenian citizenship at once, or after struggles like those of the Roman Commons,—whether any of the early dissensions in Attica were owing to distinctions between Athenians and Atticans, are questions at which we can do little more than guess. But it is plain that the change had been fully wrought out before the time of Drakôn and Solôn. The Athens for which they legislated was an Athens in whose rights and in whose wrongs all Attica shared alike. Marathôn, Aphidnai, and Eleusis* had no longer any distinct political being; they were merged into the higher whole of Athens. It is the utter disappearance of the Attic towns as political bodies which forms the distinguishing phænomenon of Athenian history. Several of them kept on a large population and considerable municipal importance; but they had given up all claims to separate sovereignty. Their relation to Athens was one neither of subjection nor of federation. A Laconian town,

* Mr. Grote (vol. iii. p. 94) remarks that the story of Tellos, which is put into the mouth of Solôn at the Lydian Court, 'assumes the independence of Eleusis in earlier times.' We think that it does even more: it seems to show (so far as we can trust it at all) that the union of Eleusis and Athens was not in Solôn's days of very long standing. The tale certainly does not sound like an event of mythical antiquity, but rather like something of which Solôn might have heard from his grandfather. Mr. Grote also infers, with much force, from the Homeric hymn to Demêtêr, that Eleusis formed an independent state at the time when that hymn was made, perhaps as late as the middle of the seventh century before Christ. If the union of the Attic towns was gradual, so important a place as Eleusis would doubtless be one of the last to come in, much like Orchomenos in Bœotia or Akanthos in Chalkidikê. It is even possible that the choice of Eleusis, rather than any other Attic town, to form a separate state under the oligarchy, after they were driven from Athens, may point to some abiding memory of its ancient independence.

whatever municipal rights it might keep, was politically in utter bondage to Sparta. Its citizens had no share whatever in the general government of their country. A Bœotian town formed a distinct commonwealth, whose sovereign rights were somewhat curtailed by its federal relations towards its fellow Bœotian towns, and still more so by the practical supremacy of Thebes over the whole Bœotian League. The burgher of Thespia or Orchomenos was a Bœotian; but he was in no sense a Theban. The burgher of Eleusis or Marathôn had well nigh lost the name of Attican in that of Athenian.* By this happy diffusion of equal political rights over the whole of Attica, Athens became the greatest of Hellenic cities. Other cities ruled over wider domains and more numerous subjects; no other city could marshal so great a number of free and equal citizens. Whether this great event was owing to force or to persuasion, to some happy accident or to long-sighted political wisdom,—whether we see in it the gradual result of predisposing causes or attribute it to the single genius of some nameless† statesman of an unrecorded age,—in any case, it stands forth as one of the foremost events in the history of the world. As the determining cause of the greatness of Athens, it was the determining cause of the distinctive and lasting greatness of Hellas. As such, the union, the *ξυνοίκισις*, of Attica becomes nothing less than the beginning of the political history of mankind.

The union of the old Attic towns made Athens and Attica words of the same political meaning; but it was very far from wiping out all political distinctions between the several classes of their inhabitants. Eleusinians and Athenians no longer strove with each other upon the field of battle; but

* [Dikaiarchos (Periêgêsis, 4) says of Attica *τῶν δ' ἐνοικούντων οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν* Ἀττικοὶ, *οἱ δ'* Ἀθηναῖοι, and he goes on to draw a distinction between the characters of the two. C. Müller, in his note, has brought together a few other cases of this rare use of the word.]

† The legend attributes it to the mythical King Thêseus. In this change, as in most others, some one man was most likely the chief agent; several things look as if it was at least begun before kingship was done away with; the King who had the chief hand in it may as well have been called Thêseus as anything else; but this is as much as we can say.

the poor Eleusinian and the poor Athenian had alike to bear the yoke, personal and political, of the oligarchy which ruled over their common country. Such is the aspect of Athenian affairs when we first begin to see them in anything like detail, at the time of the Solonian legislation. Thêseus and Solôn were the two great names round which the loving memory of Athens gathered. Her orators and poets sometimes scrupled not to attribute her full-grown democracy to Thêseus the King, no less than to Solôn the Archon. Of Thêseus we can say nothing; of the reforms of Solôn we can happily make out a good deal. If Thêseus* founded a democracy, it was assuredly not a lasting one. Even of Solôn the utmost we can say is that his reform took a decidedly democratic turn. The most distinctively democratic of Athenian institutions were undoubtedly of later date.

The questions which have been so often raised as to the so-called four Ionic tribes we shall pass by, as not directly bearing on our immediate subject. It is enough for our purpose that they formed an oppressive oligarchy. The question which immediately concerns us is, How far did Solôn break down the barriers of this oligarchy? We all know how he made a division into classes according to property, and how under his system the rich alone could be chosen to the great offices of the state. But here an important question arises, Who were the persons thus classified? According to one answer, Solôn could hardly have even looked in the direction of democracy. Niebuhr,† at one time at least, held the Solonian *timocracy* to have been a mere change within the patrician order itself; the poor noble was to be shut out from office, while the rich plebeian was not let in. Surely such a change would have

* If we may trust the sage Diodôros, democracy could look still higher for its founder. Zeus himself established that form of government, not only at Athens, but throughout the world. ἐπελθεῖν δ' αὐτὸν [Δία] καὶ τὴν οἰκουμένην σχεδὸν ἅπασαν, τοὺς μὲν λῃστὰς καὶ ἀσεβεῖς ἀναιροῦντα, τὴν δ' ἰσότητα καὶ τὴν δημοκρατίαν εἰσηγούμενον. Diod. v. 71. One would certainly never have found this out from the Promêtheus of Æschylus.

† History of Rome, vol. ii. pp. 384, 385. In his Lectures on Ancient History, vol. i. p. 288, he seems to take a different, but less intelligible, view.

been merely to make the oligarchy still narrower than it was before. Surely it is inconsistent with the well-known saying* of Solôn himself, which, whatever be its exact meaning, clearly implies that he gave the mass of the people *some* power. It would be easier to believe that the timocracy simply took the place of the oligarchy, that wealth became the qualification instead of birth, that the rich plebeian was qualified no less than the rich patrician, and the poor patrician disqualified no less than the poor plebeian. But this view seems inconsistent with the fact, which is allowed on all hands, that the Four Tribes went on as real political divisions down to the legislation of Kleisthenês. We are therefore driven, though not without some doubt and difficulty, to the belief that the timocracy extended only to the patrician order, and that the whole body of the plebeians, rich and poor, were placed, together with the poorest patricians, in the fourth or lowest class. This seems to be the view taken both by Dr. Thirlwall† and by Mr. Grote.‡

Athens then, after the Solonian reform, was still a modified oligarchy. Solôn § preserved the old Senate of Areiopagos,

* Δήμῳ μὲν γὰρ ἔδωκα τόσον κράτος ὅσσον ἐπαρκεῖ. † Vol. ii. p. 45.

‡ Mr. Grote seems decidedly to assert this, when he formally describes the Solonian constitution. He there (vol. iii. p. 176) speaks of persons not included in the Four Tribes, who still were citizens with votes in the Assembly, and adds, 'It seems, therefore, that all persons not included in the Four Tribes, whatever their grade of fortune might be, were on the same level in respect to political privilege as the fourth and lowest class of the Solonian census.' Yet afterwards (vol. iv. p. 169), when he describes the legislation of Kleisthenês, he says, 'the political franchise, or the character of an Athenian citizen, both before and since Solon, had been confined to the primitive four Ionic tribes, each of which was an aggregate of so many close corporations or *quasi* families, the gentes and phratries; none of the residents in Attica, therefore, except those included in some gens or [and ?] phratry, had any part in the political franchise. . . . Kleisthenês broke down the existing wall of privilege, and imparted the political franchise to the excluded mass.' We cannot reconcile these two statements, and we greatly prefer the former one. The latter seems to agree with the view of Niebuhr quoted above, according to which Solôn really made the oligarchy more oligarchical.

§ Mr. Grote has, we think, clearly made out that the Senate of Areiopagos was the original one, older than Solôn, and that the yearly Senate was of his foundation.

which was made up of all who had served the office of Archon with credit. But he set up alongside of it another Senate of a somewhat more popular kind. A hundred patricians chosen from each tribe formed a yearly Senate. The chief executive and judicial powers—those which had been vested in the ancient Kings, and in their successors, the Archons for life, for ten years, for one year—Solôn found and left in the hands of nine yearly Archons. These, by his legislation, were to be chosen from the first class of the census, so that their qualification implied both noble birth and the possession of the highest degree of wealth in the community. What then did the people gain by the Solonian reform? Very little, as compared with their power in after times; but very much, as compared with their earlier state of utter political nothingness. They still shared in nothing, but they now had the disposal of everything. They still had masters, but they were masters of their own choosing. The Public Assembly, the famous Ekklêsia, now arose, in which every Athenian citizen had an equal vote. Here the poor or ignoble citizen, himself shut out from office, chose and sat in judgement upon those who ruled him. Here the yearly Senate and the yearly Archons were chosen by the common suffrage of the people. Here the same Archons, after their year of office, underwent the *euthynê* or examination, without honourably passing through which they could not take their seat in the permanent Senate of Areiopagos.

The constitution of Solôn had hardly time to show itself in practical working, before the tyranny * of Peisistratos practically set it aside. Peisistratos, as is acknowledged on all hands, respected the forms of the constitution. Senate, Assembly, and Archons—all doubtless went on, but their practical power was probably about as great as when, ages

* We keep to the common usage of 'Tyrant' and 'tyranny,' to express *τύραννος* and its derivatives, rather than Mr. Grote's 'Despot' and 'despotism.' Neither 'Tyrant' nor 'Despot,' in its usual English meaning, exactly expresses *τύραννος*; either word must be used in a fixed technical sense. We see therefore no reason for departing from established custom.

after, Athens was enrolled as a favoured ally of Nero. But the rule of the Tyrants, by bringing nobles and people under one common bondage, indirectly helped the cause of democracy. When the tyranny was overpassed, it was found impossible to call back the old distinctions into practical life. Still, as the constitutional forms had been respected, there was an established system to fall back upon and to reform. Under the unwitting guidance of Peisistratos and Hippias, the Athens of Solôn had become ripe for its change into the Athens of Kleisthenês. Democracy had now fairly begun its course, though it was still far from having reached the goal.

From Kleisthenês to Periklês, reforms were so steadily going on in a democratic direction that it is not easy to fix the exact date of each change. But three great stages may clearly be made out. First come the reforms of Kleisthenês himself, after the driving out of the Tyrants: secondly, the changes which were wrought immediately after the Persian War, some of which are attributed to Aristeidês: thirdly, those which brought about the perfect consummation of democracy under Ephialtês and Periklês.

What Kleisthenês himself did seems to have been wholly to sweep away all distinctions founded on birth, and greatly to lessen the strictness of those founded on property. The Four Tribes, as a political institution, ceased to exist. The gentes and phratries of which they are made up went on as religious and social unions, but they no longer determined a man's political rank. The whole people—patricians, commoners, together with many slaves and foreigners who now received the franchise for the first time—were divided into Ten Tribes. These tribes were again subdivided into *Dêmoi* or Parishes. These last were essentially local divisions, each Dêmos forming a larger or smaller municipality. Full scope was thus given for the working of those local feelings which were very strong in the Attic bosom. But a wise arrangement, whereby the Dêmoi forming each Tribe did not lie together, hindered these local feelings from having any bad political effect, such as

they had had in the time between Solôn and Peisistratos. The ten Tribes were the immediate constituent members of the body-politic. On them all the arrangements of the state, both military and civil, depended. The citizens of each tribe were marshalled together in battle, while a board of ten Generals, one from each tribe, was placed at the head of military affairs. The yearly Senate now consisted of five hundred members, fifty from each tribe; and the Senators of each tribe in turn enjoyed the presidency in the Public Assembly. The aristocracy of birth was thus legally swept away, but the Solonian timocracy was only modified. The Archonship, confined by Solôn to the first class of his census, was now opened to the first three, into which all citizens who had the legal amount of wealth were now admitted. The fourth and poorest class alone were still shut out.

Between Kleisthenês and Periklês three great changes were gradually wrought, which, as Mr. Grote clearly shows, all hang together. All citizens became eligible for all offices. The Archons and the yearly Senate began to be named by lot instead of by election. The Archons, the successors of the ancient Kings, were cut down to that routine of police and religious ceremony which is all that we find left to them under the full-grown Democracy. Of these three changes, the earliest must, in the nature of things, have been that which admitted all citizens without distinction to office. As Mr. Grote observes, the use of the lot implies that this change had taken place. As long as restrictions were left, the introduction of the lot would not have been any gain to democracy. As long as the high offices were confined to rich men, the poor man's influence lay in his vote, by which he decided among the rich candidates. He clearly would not give up this form of power till the loss was made good by his being himself made admissible to office.

But, if the lot implies universal admissibility to the archonship, it no less implies a diminished power in the office of Archon. The Archons, like the Roman Consuls, took the place of the ancient Kings. Indeed the single Archon, whether for

life, for ten years, or for one year only, held a still more commanding position than the Roman Consul. But while Rome kept on the powers of the consulship, with comparatively little change, down to the end of the commonwealth, Athens was always lessening the once kingly powers of her Archons. Even under the oligarchy, a board of nine Archons took the place of a single ruler. Under the Democracy, whether from jealousy of the old patrician magistracy, or from whatever cause, the Archons sank into something like aldermen or police magistrates. They still kept a summary jurisdiction in small cases, but they had to bring weightier matters before the popular courts, which had succeeded to their old judicial powers and where they themselves kept only a barren presidency. Their old administrative and military functions, so far as Dêmos did not take them upon himself, were handed over to his favourite magistracy, the Ten Generals. We may be quite sure that this change was at least far advanced before the lot was made to decide their appointment. The lot was never applied at Athens to offices which called for any special fitness.* Generals and ambassadors were always chosen by the Assembly. It follows that, so long as the Archons were still the effective heads of the state, they were appointed in the same way. The lot could only have come in after the Archons had been cut down to mere routine duties, which it was held that any respectable citizen was able to go through. Notoriously discreditable persons would either be shut out by the *Dokimasia* or examination before admission to office, or else punished by the Euthynê or examination after their term of office was over.

The following then must have been the order of the three changes. *First*, All citizens were made admissible to the archonship. *Secondly*, The powers of the archonship were so cut down as to be within the competence of any respectable citizen. *Thirdly*, The Archons were appointed by lot. But it is allowed on all hands that all citizens were not admissible

* Τὸ κληρωτὰς εἶναι τὰς ἀρχὰς ἢ πάσας ἢ ὅσαι μὴ ἐμπειρίας δέονται καὶ τέχνης. Arist. Pol. vi. 2. 5.

to the archonship till after the battle of Plataia. It follows therefore that, at least up to that time, the Archons were elected,* and that they still held powers which needed special qualifications. As for the yearly Senate, where the same special qualifications were not needed in each individual member,† it is possible, though by no means certain, that the lot may have been applied to their appointment as early as the time of Kleisthenês.

The reforms of Kleisthenês and the reforms of Aristeidês, mark two great stages in the democratic march. Under Peisistratos and his sons, patrician and plebeian were confounded in one common bondage, which most likely pressed more heavily upon the patrician. Liberty was brought back, and the legal distinction between patrician and plebeian was swept away by the legislation of Kleisthenês. During the Persian invasion rich and poor showed themselves equal in suffering and in heroism; the *Thês* did and suffered side by side with the *Pentakosiomedimnos*. Their common country was won back, and the legal distinction between rich and poor was swept away by the legislation of Aristeidês. The lot and the lessened powers of the Archons must soon have followed, till at last the full-grown Democracy showed itself under Ephialtês and Periklês. What the Athenian constitution became under them, such it went on being—with the short interruptions of the Four Hundred and the Thirty—during the whole remain-

* The only objection to this view is the expression of Herodotus with regard to Kallimachos at Marathôn, ὁ τῷ κυάμῳ λαχὼν πολέμαρχος. Now Herodotus directly bears witness to the fact that the Polemarch then still held high military command. This is essential to the story, and it is a point on which he could hardly be mistaken. But the mention of the lot is a mere *obiter dictum*, in which Herodotus might easily transfer the language of his own day to an earlier period. Herodotus shows that in B.C. 490 the Polemarch acted as a General. Now the Generals were always elected; surely then in B.C. 490 the Polemarch must have been elected. There is also the direct witness of Isokratês and of Idomeneus of Lampsakos quoted by Plutarch. Their direct authority is much lower than that of Herodotus; but their positive statement on a point to which they are specially referring, may counterbalance his mere casual allusion. See Grote, vol. iv. p. 197.

† See Lysias c. Evan. § 14. The whole speech should be studied as illustrative of the *Dokimasia*.

ing period of Athenian independence. It was only by the Macedonian Antipatros—Philip and Alexander had spared her thus much—that Athens was driven once more to set up a money qualification for the exercise of her now narrowed and dishonoured citizenship.

And now what was the true nature of the full-grown Athenian constitution, that great Democracy which has been made the object of such unsparing abuse, and of which Mr. Grote stands forth as the defender? The essence of this typical Greek Democracy is that it unites all power, legislative, executive, and judicial, in the Assembly of the People. The essence of pure Democracy, as it was understood by Dêmos himself, was that the assembled people should be *Tyrant;* the name at which he shuddered when applied to a 'single person,' he seems rather to have rejoiced in when it was applied to his own collective majesty.* In the popular Assembly, where every citizen, rich or poor, has an equal vote, centres the whole authority, legislative, judicial, and executive. It may be convenient to delegate some of its functions to committees taken by lot from its own number; hence we have a probouleutic Senate and popular courts of judicature; but these bodies never lose the character of committees of the sovereign Assembly; the courts of justice are by the orators who address them constantly identified with the political Ekklêsia, and they are held to be animated by the same views and passions. Hence too magistrates have no independent authority; the Archon, and even the General, is the mere executor of the will of the sovereign People; the former indeed is charged with little more than to carry out, formally and ministerially, certain routine duties of police and ceremonial religion. The division of powers which we look on as so essential to

* Arist. Eq. 1027, 1113, 1329, 1331. Thuc. ii. 63, iii. 37. Isok. Areop. 29. *ὡς δὲ συντόμως εἰπεῖν, ἐκεῖνοι διεγνωκότες ἦσαν ὅτι δεῖ τὸν Δῆμον, ὥσπερ τύραννον, καθίσταναι τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ κολάζειν τοὺς ἐξαμαρτάνοντας καὶ κρίνειν περὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων, τοὺς δε σχολὴν ἄγειν δυναμένους καὶ βίον ἱκανον κεκτημένους ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῶν κοινῶν ὥσπερ οἰκέτας.* Cf. Mitford, chap. 37, sect. vii.

good government was at Athens never heard of. Dêmos was himself King, Minister, and Parliament. He had his smaller officials to carry out the necessary details of public business, but he was most undoubtedly his own First Lord of the Treasury, his own Foreign Secretary, his own Secretary for the Colonies. He himself kept up a personal correspondence both with foreign potentates and with his own officers on foreign service; the 'despatches' of Nikias and the 'notes' of Philip were alike addressed to no officer short of the sovereign himself; he gave personal audience to the ambassadors of other states, and clothed his own with just so great or so small a share as he deemed good of his own boundless authority. He had no need to entrust the care of his thousand dependencies to the mysterious working of a Foreign Office; he himself sat in judgement upon Mitylenaian rebels; he himself settled the allotment of lands at Chalkis or Amphipolis; he decreed by his own wisdom what duties should be levied at the Sound of Byzantion; he even ventured on a task of which two-and-twenty ages have not lessened the difficulty, and undertook, without the help of a Lord High Commissioner, to adjust the relations and compose the seditions even of Korkyra and Zakynthos.* He was his own Lord High Chancellor, his own Lord Primate, his own Commander-in-Chief. He listened to the arguments of Kleôn on behalf of a measure, and to the arguments of Nikias against it, and he ended by bidding Nikias to go and carry out the proposal which he had denounced as extravagant or unjust. He listened with approval to his own 'explanations'; he passed votes of confidence in his own policy; he advised himself to give his own royal assent to the bills which he had himself passed, without the form of a second or third reading, or the vain ceremony of moving that the Prytaneis do leave their chairs.

Dêmos then was Tyrant; and now the question comes, Did he use his despotic powers well or ill? Did he truly bring

* [Let Englishmen be thankful that this responsibility no longer lies upon them.]

himself under the censure of a great historian, who lays down the rule that an assembly of even five or six hundred persons has 'a tendency to become a mob;' and that 'a country of which the supreme executive council is a mob is surely in a perilous situation'?* This is doubtless very good constitutional doctrine for an age of Cabinet Councils and diplomatic conferences; but a Greek of the fourth or fifth century before Christ might well have doubted it. The supreme executive council of his most illustrious city was a mob, not merely of five or six hundred, but of five or six thousand, conceivably of from twenty to thirty thousand. This mob restrained itself just where a modern Parliament gives itself full freedom, and it gave itself full freedom just where a modern Parliament restrains itself. Its legislative powers were greatly narrowed by one of its own committees;† but its executive powers were unbounded. This mob, as we have seen, made peace and war; it appointed generals and gave them instructions; it gave audience to foreign ambassadors and discussed their proposals; it appointed its own ambassadors, and gave them instructions for foreign powers.‡ If comparative secrecy was ever needed in a diplomatic transaction, the larger mob which counted its thousands handed over its powers to the smaller mob of five hundred which formed the Senate of the republic.§ Generals, ambassadors, and other ministers, were of course allowed a certain liberty and authority, but so are the generals and ambassadors of the most absolute despot. But the control which Dêmos exercised over generals and ambassadors was the control of a 'Government,' not merely the control of a Parliament. The Athenian system admitted of individual Ministers, but it admitted of nothing in the shape of a Ministry. Even the probouleutic Senate did not take on itself the functions of a Cabinet. It was by the Sovereign Assembly that all public servants were directly ap-

* Macaulay's History of England, vol. iv. p. 434.

† The sworn Nomothetai. See Grote, vol. v. p. 500.

‡ Ὁ γὰρ τὴν χεῖρα ὑμῶν μέλλων αἴρειν, οὗτος ὁ πρεσβεύων ἐστίν, ὁπότερ' ἂν αὐτῷ δοκῇ, καὶ τὴν εἰρήνην καὶ τὸν πόλεμον ποιεῖν. Andok. Περὶ Εἰρ. p. 41.

§ See Grote, vol. xi. p. 332.

pointed; it was to the Sovereign Assembly that they were directly responsible.

Now a fair examination of Grecian history will assuredly lead us to the conclusion that this mob clothed with executive functions made one of the best governments which the world ever saw. It did not work impossibilities; it did not change earth into paradise nor men into angels; it did not forestall every improvement which has since appeared in the world; still less did it forestall all the improvements which we may trust are yet in store for mankind. But that government cannot be called a bad one which is better than any other government of its own time. And surely that government must be called a good one which is a marked improvement upon every government which has gone before it. The Athenian Democracy is entitled to both these kinds of praise. Dêmos was guilty of some follies and some crimes; but he was guilty of fewer follies and fewer crimes, and he did more wise and noble deeds, than any government of his own or of any earlier age.

First then, the Democracy of Athens was the first great instance which the world ever saw of the substitution of law for force. Here, as usual, we find in Athens the highest instance of a tendency common to all Greece. The rudest Greek community had a far more advanced conception of law than any barbarian state which it came across. The Athenian Democracy carried the conception into more perfect working than any other state in Greece. The history of an eastern despotism is commonly a history of usurpations, rebellions, and massacres. Blood is shed without mercy to decide which of two rival men shall be the despot. In too many Greek commonwealths, blood was shed with hardly more of mercy to decide which of two political parties should have the upper hand. But even here, as the aim of the Greek is one degree nobler, so are his means one degree less cruel. The barbarian mutilates, impales, crucifies: the Greek simply slays. Again, what the Greek of Argos or Korkyra is to the Barbarian, the Greek of Athens is to the Greek of Argos or

Korkyra. The Athenian, at least the democratic Athenian, does not even slay. Dêmos put some men to death unjustly, some illegally: the Generals at Arginousai died by a bill of attainder worthy of a Tudor Parliament; but Dêmos was never guilty of massacre or assassination in any civil struggle. The dagger of the assassin, the hemlock administered without trial, were the weapons only of his enemies. Their use was confined to the good, the noble, the refined, the men of birth and culture, the boasted *βέλτιστοι* and *καλοκἀγαθοί* who shared the power, and abetted the crimes, of the Four Hundred and the Thirty. Never did the history of the world show forth nobler instances of moderation and good faith than the conduct of the Athenian People on each occasion of its restoration. In no other city could such a triumph have been wrought without wholesale massacres and confiscations. The victorious Dêmos was satisfied with the legal trial and execution of a few notorious traitors. For the rest an amnesty was proclaimed, oaths were sworn, and, as even the oligarchic historian pointedly tells us, the People abode by its oaths.* Such was the result of a form of government in which every citizen partook, where every question was fairly argued on both sides, and where the minority peaceably yielded to an adverse vote.

But we are told that the Athenian people were jealous and suspicious of their most distinguished citizens. Aristeidês was ostracized, Periklês was fined, Sôkratês was put to death, Iphikratês and Chabrias dared not live at home for fear of popular jealousy. No rich man had a moment's quiet between liturgies on the one hand and sycophants on the other. Base and selfish demagogues enjoyed the confidence from which high-born and virtuous aristocrats were debarred. Such is the picture commonly drawn of the practical working of Athenian freedom. Let us group together all these charges into two or three. First, then, what was the general condition of a rich man at Athens?

The real ground of complaint brought against the Athenian

* *Τοῖς ὅρκοις ἐμμένει ὁ Δῆμος.* Xen. Hell. ii. 4, 43.

Democracy by its aristocratic enemies was simply that it kept them from somewhat of that licence to do evil which they enjoyed elsewhere. We may judge of the real nature of their wrongs by one charge which is gravely brought against Athens by her own apostate citizen. She did not indeed forestall our own fathers and grandfathers by abolishing either slavery or the slave-trade; but she at least did something to lighten the yoke of the slave. At Athens, says Xenophôn,* a man did not dare to beat a foreigner or another man's slave: in well-regulated Sparta such liberty seems to have been allowed. But what did the rich really suffer? All legal advantages had been taken away both from birth and wealth; but in all ages birth and wealth carry with them certain natural advantages which no legislation can take away. And these advantages the Athenian aristocrats enjoyed only too freely. What licence the rich practically exercised even under the full-grown Democracy we see in the stories of Alkibiadês and Meidias. What licence they deemed themselves entitled to we see in the share taken by the whole equestrian order in the vilest deeds of the Thirty. The high and honourable offices of the commonwealth fell all but exclusively to their share. It was rare indeed that the fleets and armies of Athens were commanded by other than men of old aristocratic blood. If the rich man was burthened with heavy and costly liturgies, if he had to furnish a chorus or to fit out a trireme, we commonly find that he laid out a sum far beyond his legal liability, in order to make political capital out of his munificence.†

Again, did the Athenian Dêmos deserve either the charge of inconstancy so commonly brought against it, or that other charge which Macaulay brings in its stead against 'the common people,' namely, that 'they almost invariably choose their favourite so ill, that their constancy is a vice and not a virtue?'‡ Do the 'common people' of Athens, the mob of lamp-makers,

* De Rep. Ath. i. 10.

† See Lysias, Ἀπ. Δωρ. § 2–9. Δήμ. Κατ. § 16. Περὶ Εὐαν. § 4.

‡ History of England, vol. i. p. 627.

lyre-makers, and leather-sellers, fairly come under either charge? With regard to measures, their fault was certainly rather obstinacy than inconstancy. Till their energy began to fail them altogether, they were, as the fatal Sicilian expedition proved, only too slow to change, too fully bent on cleaving to a policy after it had been shown to be hurtful. But, if they were obstinate about measures, were they fickle about men? Were they either inconstant in their attachments, or did they form those attachments on slight grounds? They are said to have been inconstant because Miltiadês was fined. This charge Mr. Grote* has tossed to the winds. No man can dare to bring it up again, unless he is ready to lay down the principle that one great public service is to secure a man from punishment for all his after offences. In fact, instead of fickleness, the Athenians seem rather to have been remarkable for strange constancy to their favourites. Take the case of Nikias at one stage of their history, and that of Phôkiôn at another. Nikias, on whom we hold that Mr. Grote is unduly hard, was a rich man, a man of decided aristocratic tendencies, but one who never found that either his wealth or his politics laid him open to public jealousy or mistrust. Phôkiôn was poor; but of all men he was the last to be called a flatterer of the People; he was rather remarkable for saying the most unpleasant things in the most unpleasant way. Yet, year after year, first Nikias, and then Phôkiôn, were elected Generals of the commonwealth. Nikias kept to the last a confidence which proved fatal both to himself and to the state. Phôkiôn at last drank the hemlock juice; but it was not till Athens had lost her freedom; it was not till he had been the accomplice of her oppressors; and even then, it was not by the lawful sentence of the People, but by the voice of an irregular rabble, hounded on by a foreign deliverer or conqueror. In the greatest crime that the People ever did, the execution of the Generals at Arginousai, what we have a right to condemn is the breach of the ordinary securities which the law had provided for accused persons. On the

* Vol. iv. p. 497.

guilt or innocence of the Generals themselves it is hardly safe to pronounce with confidence.*

But what has the apologist of Athens to say to the institution of Ostracism? Aristeidês, Themistoklês, Kimôn, Thucydides son of Melêsias, were all ostracized; all, that is, were banished without crime—banished, we might almost say, avowedly on account of their merits. Mr. Grote has, we think, made out a very fair case in behalf of the ostracism. It was a rude and imperfect means of meeting a temporary danger, while the Democracy was still in a rude and imperfect state. In the fully developed Democracy ostracism had no place; it was never formally abolished, but it silently dropped out of use. It was bad in theory; it could have no place in a fixed and settled polity; but it was meant to meet—and perhaps no other means could have met—a real danger during the infancy of the commonwealth. In most Grecian cities, the triumph of one political party carried with it the slaughter, exile, and confiscation of the other. Ostracism was meant to hinder these horrors; it did hinder them very thoroughly. Ostracism stood instead of revolutions, proscriptions, bills of attainder. When civil strife seemed to hang over the state, the People were called on to decide who was the dangerous person. If six thousand secret votes agreed in naming the same person, he had to go abroad for ten years. He could hardly be said to be banished; still less was he dishonoured.† His property was untouched; his political rights were merely suspended; in many cases he was actually recalled before his whole time of absence was over. Ostracism then might be an evil, perhaps a wrong; but it was the only way that showed itself of hindering far greater evils and far greater wrongs. The honourable exile

* Mr. Grote's remarks on this event are throughout most weighty. He leans however a little more to the unfavourable side, as regards the Generals than we are disposed to do.

[I shall say something more on this head in the Appendix to this Essay.]

† The pseudo-Andokidês (c. Alcib. 4) says that ostracism was too heavy a punishment for private, too light for public offences; *τῶν δὲ δημοσίων μικρὰν καὶ οὐδενὸς ἀξίαν ἡγοῦμαι ζημίαν, ἐξὸν κολάζειν χρήμασι καὶ δεσμῷ καὶ θανάτῳ.*

of one stood instead of the proscription of many. Ostracism did its work and then disappeared. It became as wholly out of date under the later Democracy as the far sterner safeguard of impeachment has now become in England. In both cases liberty has grown strong enough to dispense with any exceptional safeguard. It has been found that party-spirit can be kept within legal and constitutional bounds without resorting to extra-legal means for its restraint.

But Dêmos not only banished his statesmen; he allowed himself to be led by his Demagogues. Now on this head not only is there a great popular misconception afloat, but we cannot help thinking that Mr. Grote himself labours under a certain amount of misconception. Mr. Grote delights to call the Demagogues 'opposition speakers,' in contrast to the great men of action whom he half looks on as an executive Cabinet. He evidently has in his mind the vision of Joseph Hume calling the ministerial estimates over the coals, or of his own annual motion for the ballot defeated by the frowns of the Treasury benches or the apathy of the Opposition itself.* He does not always remember, what no man knows better than himself as matter of fact, that at Athens there were no Treasury benches, no ministerial estimates, and therefore no opposition speakers. He allows that the term is not strictly accurate: to us it seems not only not to be strictly accurate but to be altogether misleading. There is hardly any analogy between the two cases. The direct sovereignty vested in the Assembly admitted of nothing answering to office and opposition. Mr. Grote looks on Nikias as being in office, and Kleôn as being in opposition. Now undoubtedly, as one of the Generals of the commonwealth, Nikias was, in a certain sense, 'in office.' He held one of the highest places of trust and authority in the state. But he was not in office in the same sense in which Lord Palmerston or Lord Derby was in office among ourselves. He was not even in office in the same sense in which Quintus Fabius or Manius Curius was in office at

* [Pity that the historian could not see the fruit of his own labours in 1872.]

Rome, or in which Aratos or Lydiadas was in office in the Achaian League. With us a minister whose policy is no longer followed is held to be no longer trusted, and he no longer retains office. But Nikias constantly saw his policy set aside, while he himself still continued to be trusted, and still continued to retain office. Out of the Assembly Nikias was a great officer of the commonwealth, armed with high authority to carry out the bidding of the Assembly. In the Assembly Nikias was one citizen out of some thousands, a citizen who was always listened to with respect, but whose advice was sometimes followed and sometimes not. Kleôn, in the Assembly, stood in the same position as Nikias. He often canvassed the doings of men in office; but he often persuaded the People to follow his policy rather than theirs. Now the idea of an 'opposition speaker' implies that his policy is not at present followed. We hold then that it is not merely not strictly accurate, but that it is thoroughly misleading, to apply the name to an Athenian Demagogue.*

The word Demagogue means simply 'a leader of the people,'† and it belongs to Themistoklês and Periklês as much as to Kleôn and Hyperbolos. But, apart from any invidious meaning, it means, in its later use, a political leader who is not also a military leader. The Demagogue is a citizen whose advice the Assembly habitually takes, but whom it does not place at the head of its armies. In early times political

* The late Professor Grote, in a pamphlet in answer to a puny attack on his brother, acutely remarked that Mr. Grote had been somewhat misled by assuming the position of Kleôn at Athens as being the same as that of Athênagoras at Syracuse. Now the speech of Athênagoras in Thucydides does read like that of an 'opposition speaker.' He talks like one who has been rather kept in the dark about public affairs, and who wants to get an answer out of men in office. We do not know the details of the Syracusan constitution, and the probability is that at this time it entrusted individual magistrates with greater powers than was the case at Athens. Such is the natural inference from the debate in Thucydides, while Aristotle distinctly says that Syracuse became, after the Athenian invasion, more democratic than before. See Grote, vol. x. p. 538. In no case can we safely argue from one Grecian city to another.

† Lysias does not scruple to speak of *ἀγαθοὶ δημαγωγοί*, and to point out their duties. *Κατὰ Ἐπικ.* § 11.

and military authority always go together. Homer's perfect ruler is

ἀμφότερον βασιλεύς τ' ἀγαθὸς κρατερός τ' αἰχμήτης.

And this Homeric sentiment long survived the establishment of democracy. Miltiadês, Aristeidês, and Themistoklês, were great alike on the battle-field and in the Assembly. But, as both military and political science advanced, it was found that the highest merit in the one was not always found in company with the highest merit in the other. The characters of the military commander and the political leader were gradually separated. The first germs of this division we find in the days of Kimôn and Periklês. Kimôn was no mean politician; but his real genius clearly called him to warfare with the Barbarian. Periklês was an able and successful general; but in him the military character was quite subordinate to that of the political leader. It was a wise compromise which entrusted Kimôn with the defence of the state abroad and Periklês with its management at home. After Periklês the separation widened. We nowhere hear of Dêmosthenês and Phormiôn as political leaders; and even in Nikias the political is subordinate to the military character. Kleôn, on the other hand, was a politician but not a soldier. But the old notion of combining military and political position was not quite lost. It was still deemed that he who proposed a warlike expedition should himself, if it were needful, be able to conduct it. Kleôn in an evil hour was tempted to take on himself military functions: he was forced into command against Sphaktêria; by the able and loyal help of Dêmosthenês he acquitted himself with honour. But his head was turned by success; he aspired to independent command; he measured himself against the mighty Brasidas; and the fatal battle of Amphipolis was the result. It now became clear that the Demagogue and the General must commonly be two distinct persons. The versatile genius of Alkibiadês again united the two characters; but he left no successor. The soldier Thrasyboulos needed the help of the civilian Archinôs to give its new life to the restored Democracy. Konôn, Iphikratês,

Chabrias, Timotheos, were almost exclusively generals; Kallistratos, Dêmosthenês, Hyperidês, and Æschinês, were quite exclusively demagogues. Phôkiôn alone united something of both characters. But Phôkiôn was primarily a general: in the Assembly he was more truly an 'opposition-speaker' than Kleôn; at least he commonly spoke in opposition to the prevailing opinions of his time.

In fact, as times advanced, the separation between the two characters became too wide. Their final separation is closely connected with that decay of military spirit in Greece which is so instructively dealt with by Mr. Grote in his eleventh volume. Under the old system, citizen and soldier, political and military leader, had been convertible terms. The orator who proposed an expedition was the general who commanded it. The citizens who voted for his proposal were the soldiers who served under his command. But the later Athenians shrank from military service in their own persons. Nor was the evil peculiar to Athens. Throughout Greece there arose a class of professional soldiers. Now in Greece a professional soldier could hardly be distinguished from a mercenary, and a mercenary could hardly be distinguished from a brigand. Professional soldiers of this kind needed professional generals, just as naturally as the citizen-soldiers of earlier times needed orator-generals. We are told that it was because of the jealousy of the people that Iphikratês and Chabrias commonly lived away from Athens. The real case is very plain. Iphikratês and Chabrias were professional generals. When their country was at war, they served their country. When their country was at peace, they liked better to serve some one else than to live quietly at home. Iphikratês even went so far as to help his barbarian father-in-law in a contest with Athens. From professional generals of this kind there is surely but one step to professional robbers like Charês and Charidêmos of Euboia.

A Demagogue then was simply an influential speaker of popular politics. Dêmosthenês is commonly distinguished as an orator, while Kleôn is branded as a Demagogue; but the

position of the one was the same as the position of the other. The only question is as to the wisdom and the honesty of the advice given either by Kleôn or by Dêmosthenês. Now no part of Mr. Grote's History took the world more by surprise than his elaborate vindication of Kleôn. A vindication we may fairly call it, though it leaves many points in Kleôn's character open to blame, when we compare it with the unmeasured invective of every other writer. We suspect that Mr. Grote at once enjoyed the paradox, and felt himself bound to say something on behalf of the Demagogue. We do not wholly go along with him, but we must say that his defence is more than plausible; it is perfectly good on several of the counts. Two remarks we must make. We are told that the Demagogues flattered the People. Now nothing can be less like flattery of the People than Kleôn's speech in the debate on Mitylênê. It is as full of reproaches against the People as the speeches of Dêmosthenês eighty years later. Again, we are told that Kleôn was so frightfully abusive. He could hardly be more abusive than both Dêmosthenês and Æschinês. Now in Dêmosthenês and Æschinês, every one regrets their abusive language as a fault; no one looks on it as wholly destroying their claim to honour. Why then should Kleôn receive harder measure?

With the character of Kleôn the character of Thucydides is inseparably bound up. Mr. Grote has brought some censure upon himself by putting forth two opinions on this point. First, that Thucydides was to blame for the loss of Amphipolis; secondly, that the disparaging character which he gives of Kleôn was partly the result of personal enmity. Now Thucydides is our only witness, and we have perfect right to cross-question him. And we think Mr. Grote clearly shows that Thucydides should have been nowhere but at Amphipolis when Amphipolis was in danger; at all events, Thucydides gives no good reason for his being at Thasos. Mr. Grote in no way disputes the truthfulness of Thucydides; he only disputes the propriety of his military conduct as reported by himself. The Athenian People, by whom Thucydides was banished, clearly took the same view as Mr. Grote. As for the case between Thucydides and Kleôn, of that we

have spoken elsewhere.* Here we need only ask why, as no one thinks himself bound to accept Thucydides' judgement of Antiphôn, it should be thought such frightful heresy in Mr. Grote to make use of the like discretion as to Thucydides' judgement of Kleôn?

The judicial system of the Democracy formed a most remarkable feature in Athenian life, and Mr. Grote's remarks upon the working of the popular courts of justice are among the most valuable things in his work. But we think that he is not quite clear in his historical view as to their introduction. When speaking of Kleisthenês, he seems to attribute more to his early reform than he afterwards does when he speaks of Periklês.† This judicial system, which at any rate received its final perfection from the hands of Periklês, was, as Mr. Grote truly says, an exaggeration of jury trial, both in its merits and its defects. We should remember that the Athenian jurisprudence was much less complicated than our own, and that there was no class of professional lawyers. The question was, Who shall judge? an individual Archon or a large body of citizens? All Grecian experience showed that, where a single magistrate judged, there was far more danger of corruption, oppression, and sacrifice of justice to private interest. That the popular courts were always inclined to undue severity is a mere calumny. Their fault was a tendency to listen to irrelevant matter on both sides alike. They doubtless pronounced some unrighteous condemnations and some unrighteous acquittals, but the unrighteous acquittals were at least as common as the unrighteous condemnations.‡

* See above p. 108.

† We have already mentioned Mr. Grote's mistranslation of the passage in Arist. Pol. ii. 12, 4. *τὰ δὲ δικαστήρια μισθοφόρα κατέστησε Περικλῆς*, which he renders 'Perikles first constituted the paid dikasteries; that is, the dikasteries as well as the pay were of his introduction.' Mr. Grote's version, we need hardly say, would require *τὰ δικαστήρια τὰ μισθοφόρα*. But it is just possible that the meaning may be (paraphrastically) something of this kind: 'Periklês, in instituting the *δικαστήρια*, made them paid rather than gratuitous.' But, on turning back to Mr. Grote's account of Kleisthenês (vol. iv. p. 187) we find that he allows very considerable judicial powers to have been vested in popular bodies by his constitution,

‡ On this head see especially Dem. *Περὶ Παραπρ.* § 252, and the opening of Lysias' speech against Nikomachos.

The Athenian system of jurisprudence is moreover closely bound up with one of the most important subjects of all. It is bound up with the relations of Athens to her dependencies among other Grecian cities. Athens, as we have already said, was the most illustrious of Greek states, not only as an individual autonomous city, but as a ruler over other Greeks, and as a Pan-Hellenic leader against the Barbarian. In the latter character at least she stands unrivalled. When Crœsus subdued the Ionic cities, Sparta was the ally of the first Barbarian who bore rule over Greeks. When the same cities revolted against Darius, Athens fought by their side in the first Greek War of Independence. During the great Persian War, Athens was the one Grecian city whose endurance never failed for a moment. While Northern Greece fought on the side of the invader, while Peloponnêsos thought of Peloponnesian interests alone, Athens never flinched, never faltered. Her fields were harried; her city was destroyed; the most favourable terms of submission were offered to her; but neither fear nor hope moved her for a moment. She rose far above that local jealousy which was the common bane of Hellas. When her contingent was two-thirds of the whole fleet, she cheerfully gave up the command to a Lacedæmonian landsman. On the field of Plataia, the victors of Marathôn were ready to yield the place of honour to the presumptuous pretensions of Tegea. Athens, more than any other state, drove back the invader from Greece itself; Athens, without any help from the mainland, carried a triumphant war into his own territory. She freed the Ægæan from the presence of barbarian fleets, and the Greeks of Asia from the presence of barbarian tribute-gatherers. And from this glorious position she never willingly drew back. The Democracy of Athens was never numbered among the pensioners of the Great King, till the oligarchy of Sparta drove her to such a course in self-defence. It was Sparta who first betrayed the Greeks of Asia as the price of barbarian help. It was Sparta who negotiated the shameful peace of Antalkidas; it was Sparta who again acknowledged the Greeks of Asia as the subjects, and the Greeks

of Europe as something very like the vassals, of the power which Athens had kept back three days' journey from the shores of the Grecian seas.

These thoughts lead us at once to the character and position of Athens as a ruler over other Greeks. When the Spartans withdrew from the war with Persia, the Greek cities of Thrace, Asia, and the Ægæan islands, formed themselves of their own free will into the confederacy of Dêlos, under the presidency of Athens. Mr. Grote has well shown how, by the gradual working of circumstances, and without any single *coup d'état*, this Athenian presidency was changed into an Athenian empire. This empire began in a pre-eminence honourably won and willingly bestowed; it ended in a supremacy, not positively oppressive, but offensive to Greek political instincts, and exercised with little regard to aught but the interests of the ruling city. That is to say, Athens, like every other recorded state, ancient or modern, kingdom or commonwealth, could not withstand the temptation to unjust though plausible aggrandizement. But certainly Athens, as a ruler of dependencies, need not be ashamed of a comparison with other states in the same position. The subject of Athens gained some solid advantages: he saw the sea kept clear alike from pirates and from hostile fleets; he was wholly at rest as to all danger from the Great King; if one city had a quarrel with another, the supremacy of Athens afforded means for a peaceful, instead of a warlike, settlement of differences. Far less oppression was exercised by Athenian than by Persian or Spartan commanders; and, when instances of oppression did happen, the chance of redress was far greater than commonly lies open to subject commonwealths. Here we see one great advantage of the Athenian system of judicature, of the numerous judges, the publicity of proceedings, the free licence alike of accusation and defence. The popular courts of Athens, as even their enemies acknowledged, were ever ready to punish the wrong-doer. Nor does it appear that Athens, as a general rule, interfered with the form of internal government in the allied cities. But all these advantages which the allied cities

enjoyed under the rule of Athens were purchased at the cost of what the Greek loved more than all of them, the position of his city as a sovereign state. It is of this political degradation, much more than of any practical oppression, that the orators hostile to Athens always complain. The Athenian sway was not hated; but it was acquiesced in without affection. Revolts were almost always the work of a few leading men, without the consent, sometimes directly against the will, of the people. But, on the other hand, the people were not often found ready to do or to suffer anything in the cause of Athens. Athens, in short, was not an oppressive sovereign, but she was a sovereign; and the mere existence of a sovereign was hateful to the political instincts of Greece.

But let us see what happened when the Athenian Empire came to an end, when Sparta gave herself out as the liberator and president of Greece. Freedom, under her, certainly put on a strange form. Athens had at least kept back the Barbarian: Sparta gave up the Asiatic Greeks to be subjects of Persia. Athens, satisfied with tribute, left the internal government of the cities to themselves: Sparta set up a narrow oligarchy in each, and backed it by a Spartan governor and garrison. Truly the subject states must have longed for the restoration of Athenian bondage, when each Asiatic city bowed to a Persian satrap, and each European city to a Spartan harmost. One main principle of Spartan government was never to punish, much less to redress, the evil deeds of Spartan commanders abroad. Phoibidas seized the Theban Kadmeia: justice was mocked by the infliction of a fine on the offender, while his government continued to profit by his offence. Sphodrias invaded Attica in time of peace: private interest rescued the wrong-doer from even the pretence of judicial censure. When the Athenian Pachês carried off two free women of Mitylênê and slew their husbands, the injured women accused him before an Athenian tribunal: his condemnation was certain, and he stabbed himself in open court. But when two Spartan officers did the like outrage by the daughters of Skedasos of Leuktra, the father in vain

sought for redress at Sparta, and not the ravishers, but their victims, were driven to self-destruction.

The best tribute to the comparative merit of the Athenian empire is the voluntary reconstruction of the confederacy under Timotheos. The insular cities had found that Athenian supremacy was at least the second best thing when absolute independence was not to be had. Again was Athens installed as constitutional president of an equal confederacy. Again she began gradually to change into an autocrat. Again she grasped at the absolute possession of various cities. And moreover, under the new state of things, her professional generals and mercenary soldiers proved far greater scourges to the allied cities than the orator-generals and citizen-soldiers of her first empire. These causes at last led to the Social War, which left both parties ready victims for the Macedonian aggressor.

Athens then, as a ruler of Greeks, deserves at least comparative praise. Not but that some of her individual acts were both cruel and impolitic. The massacres which she decreed at Mitylênê, which she carried out at Skiônê and Mêlos, are sad blots on her fame. But, even here, we should remember the harshness of the Greek laws of war. The life of the prisoner, apart from any special compact, was in no way sacred. The victor might at pleasure enslave or put him to death. These massacres were only very harsh instances of a very harsh rule, carried out on a scale which gives them a character of fearful atrocity. That at Mêlos, above all, is clothed with additional blackness when we think that the war itself was an utterly unprovoked aggression. But think of the deeds of oligarchic Sparta. Viler than any Athenian deed of blood was the Spartan massacre at Plataia. Athens relentlessly carried out a cruel law of war; but the Plataian captives were no longer prisoners of war: they were prisoners at the bar of justice, mocked by the promise of a fair trial, and slaughtered, not by a military, but by a judicial murder. Even in this catalogue of crime, we find our usual three degrees. Athens massacred her prisoners by wholesale; Sparta murdered

the unarmed merchants of neutral states. But at least both Athens and Sparta were satisfied with simple murder: the refinements of torture and mutilation were left to the Barbarians of Persia and of Carthage.

Such is a picture of the Democracy of Athens, drawn chiefly after the great historian with whose noble work we have been dealing. We thus see how that great commonwealth, the first fully developed free constitution that the world had seen, not only gave the political life of each citizen a fuller and wider action than any constitution that has ever been, but also secured life and property and personal freedom better than any other government of its own age, or of many ages afterwards. Its defect was that it was the offspring of an enthusiasm too high-strung, and of a citizenship too narrow, to allow of lasting greatness. Dêmos was but the shadow of his former self after his 'happy restoration' by the Albemarle of Democracy, the hero of Phylai and Peiraieus. At the age of two centuries he became politically and morally dead under the care of his two rival Dêmêtrioi, and from thenceforth he did but drag on a weary second childhood till he disappeared under a Flavian Emperor in the vast charnel-house of Roman dominion. But his real life, short as it was, was as glorious as it was short. English writers are too apt to argue on this head from what they see around them at home. Mitford was right enough when he assumed that an English county meeting reached the very height of political ignorance; only he should not have thence leaped to a similar conclusion as to the assembled people of Athens. Certainly squires and farmers alike, gathered together at times few and far between under some political excitement, are utterly incapable of really entertaining a political question, or of getting beyond some party watch-word of 'Liberal' or 'Conservative,' 'Free-Trade' or 'Protection.'* But we must not thence infer that the Ekklêsia of

* [I believe however that I was not so much thinking of meetings gathered for any real political purpose, as of the Ephesian mobs—largely made up of

Athens presented a scene equally deplorable. Such writers forget that, as Macaulay has shown in a brilliant passage which every one should be able to call to mind, the common life of the Athenian was itself the best of political educations. We suspect that the average Athenian citizen was, in political intelligence, above the average English Member of Parliament. It was this concentration of all power in an aggregate of which every citizen formed a part, which is the distinguishing characteristic of true Greek democracy. Florence had nothing like it; there has been nothing like it in the modern world: the few pure democracies which have lingered on to our own day have never had such mighty questions laid before them, and have never had such statesmen and orators to lead them. The great Democracy has had no fellow; but the political lessons which it teaches are none the less lessons for all time and for every land and people.

It is not without some important points of dissent, but it is with deep and heartfelt admiration, that we part company with the illustrious subject of this essay—*τὸν μέγαν Ἄγγλον ἱστοριογράφον Γεώργιον Γρότε*, as we are glad to find him called in the land of which he writes.* His work is one of the glories of our age and country. Honourable as it is to the intellectual, it is still more honourable to the moral, qualities of its author. His unwearied research, his clearness of insight, his depth and originality of thought, are more easily to be paralleled than his diligent and conscientious striving after truth, and the candour with which he marshals in their due order even the facts which tell most strongly against his own conclusions. And when we think that we can place him side by side with another writer of the same age and country, and devoted to the same studies—a writer of merit equal in degree, though widely different

well-dressed persons—which came together to roar against religious liberty at the time of the so-called 'Papal Aggression.' For that folly some of our statesmen have since stood on the stool of repentance.]

* In the Lectures of Professor Constantine Paparrêgopoulos of Athens, *περὶ τῆς Ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς Διαμορφώσεως τοῦ ἀρχαίου Ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους*, p. 3.

in kind—we may say that it is no small tribute that the England of the nineteenth century has paid to the first founders of art and freedom and civilized life. If the mighty men of old Hellas can look out of their graves, they may be well pleased to see two such minds as those of George Grote and Connop Thirlwall give long years of busy life to set forth their thoughts and deeds as a lesson of wisdom for the men of lands of which they themselves had never heard.

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## CURTIUS'S HISTORY OF GREECE.

### I.

THE Grecian History of Ernst Curtius is doubtless already well known to all those students of the subject who do not shrink from reading a German book in the original. It is really wonderful how many histories of Greece may be written, each of them thoroughly good in its own way, and yet none of which allows us to dispense with the others. We believe that the impetuous generation which now presides over education at Oxford has long ago thrown Bishop Thirlwall behind the fire. Yet no rational English student of Grecian history would think that he had mastered his subject, unless he had compared both Thirlwall and Grote with one another and with the original writers. So now, though we should recommend every such student to read Curtius without fail, we in nowise hold that his reading of Curtius at all lets him off from the duty of reading both Grote and Thirlwall also. In studying what is called ancient history, where the original authorities are for the most part scanty, good modern guides are a matter of distinct necessity as commentators and harmonizers. But where a great deal must always be matter of inference, theory, and even conjecture, it is highly dangerous to follow any one modern guide implicitly. Inferences and theories, however ingenious and probable, must not be put on the same level as ascertained facts. Five-and-twenty years ago the theories of Niebuhr were accepted as if they rested on the evidence of eye-witnesses. A faith yet more self-sacrificing seems now to be given to the more novel theories of Mommsen. All this is thoroughly bad. The use of a modern historian is to collect and sift the original writers, and to act as their interpreter, not to act as a prophet on his own account. In a subject like Grecian or Roman history, it is specially mischievous to rely on any one modern guide. Each writer, if he is fit for his work, will suggest valuable matter for thought; but none of them can be entitled to implicit submission. Each will look at things differently, according to his natural turn of mind, according to his place of birth, his political party, and the many other influences which affect a man's point of view. One writer will succeed best in one part of his subject, another in another. Thirlwall, Grote, Curtius, others besides, all have

their use; each teaches something which the others do not teach; each is the strongest in some particular part of their common subject. A careful student will read and weigh all of them, but he will decline to pledge himself as the bondslave of any one among them.

The work of Curtius appears in the same series with the work of Mommsen, and it is impossible to avoid comparing the two. There is no trace in Curtius of that boisterous dogmatism with which Mommsen, in well nigh every page, sets forth some startling theory without deigning to give any shadow of a reason, and hurls some epithet of abuse at all who refuse to believe on the spot. The one very startling thing which Curtius has to put forward in his first volume is put forth quietly and soberly, not the least in the knock-me-down style of his fellow-worker, and it is moreover supported by an Excursus at the end. In another point also Curtius has greatly the advantage over Mommsen. A German, professing to write in German, he does not shrink from what he professes. No one can give the honourable name of High-Dutch to the half-Welsh jargon of Mommsen, in which about every third word is some needless French or Latin intruder. There is nothing of this kind about Curtius. Few modern books, German or English, are freer from this wretched affectation. In his hands the stores of his own noble language are shown to be fully capable of dealing with his subject, as with any other subject. And, more than this, his book is one of the few books in German prose which can be read with real pleasure. He is always clear and graceful, and, though some even of his sentences might be shortened with advantage, they at least do not go rambling over whole pages. As a mere work of literature, apart from its historical value, we are disposed to place the work of Curtius in a very high rank.

The first volume of the original text goes down to the Ionic revolt and the battle of Ladê. It thus contains the whole of that ethnological and mythological matter which must form the beginning of any History of Greece, the introduction to its strictly historical portions, and it also carries on the story some way into far more strictly historic times. In going again through matters which have so often been gone through before, we look, if not for actually new facts, at least for some new way of looking at them, for some new light thrown upon them. Without some such claim as this on our attention, we do not admit a new writer's right to call us to listen again to so old a story. But Curtius undoubtedly makes out his claim to attention by a display of special excellence in one branch of his subject. His strong point seems to us to be geography. Curtius was known as a traveller and a geographer before he was known as an historian; and his knowledge of the country, and his keen eye for the characteristic features of the whole land and of its several portions, stand him in good stead in every page. The first chapter seems to us the best, simply because it is the most geographical. We never read a more vivid sketch of the aspect of any country. Curtius gives us an elaborate picture of the whole land, marking with a most delicate touch all that distinguishes every valley and seaboard from every other. He brings out, as clearly as words can bring out, the physical conformation, the climate, the products, of the different countries round the Ægæan Sea, and the way in which the course of their history has been influenced by these geographical features. The whole thing is done with a kind of enthusiasm which communicates itself to the reader, and which could only be kindled by one who is personally and minutely familiar with the land of

which he is writing. Mr. Grote bestowed great pains on the geographical part of his work, but we believe that he never visited Greece, and we suspect that, even if he had, he would not have given us the same vivid picture as Curtius has done. The difference lies in the turn of mind and way of looking at things natural to the two men. We might perhaps say that Curtius has a direct love, a sort of personal regard, for Greece—that is, for Hellas in the widest sense—for the land itself, as for a personal friend whose acquaintance he has made and enjoyed. To Mr. Grote, on the other hand, Greece is simply the scene of certain great political events. He has studied the geographical and other features of the country with minute and conscientious care, because a knowledge of them is essential to an understanding of the events which happened among them. But it is only in this secondary way that the country itself has any attraction for him. He cannot, as Curtius can, throw a fascination over a geographical lesson. Next to the opening part, the description of Greece—taking in of course Asiatic as well as European Greece—comes, in our eyes, the chapter on Greek colonization. Here again the geographical powers of Curtius are called out with admirable effect. But of course he cannot produce the same fascinating picture of settlements in Spain or in the Tauric Chersonêsos as he can when he is describing European Greece itself, and those Asiatic islands and shores which cannot be separated from it as a geographical and historical whole.

But, to keep everything in its proper proportion, when we turn to the strictly political parts of the history, we find the balance of merit no less distinctly in favour of the English writer. In these parts of the history, it is to the English writer that we have to look for originality, vigour, and clearness—for suggestions which strike at the time, and which we carry off to dwell upon afterwards. To read the political part of Mr. Grote's history, even in these its earliest portions, is an epoch in a man's life. Solôn, Peisistratos, Kleisthenês, are names with which we had been familiar from childhood; it was in the hands of Mr. Grote that they received a life and meaning which had never belonged to them before. But we have read the parts of Curtius' history which answer to them without receiving any marked new impression. It is all good and clear and accurate, and we often light upon very suggestive remarks. But the whole is not specially striking. In the geographical parts of the book, just as in the political parts of Grote, we feel that a really new light has come upon us; we do not feel this in the political parts of Curtius. The difference is no doubt in some degree owing to the different forms of the two works. Mr. Grote could discuss and argue; he could illustrate by examples, he could explain and confirm by references, to any amount that he thought good. Curtius has been cut off from much of this liberty by the fetters in which he has evidently been working, at any rate in his first volume. He never falls into the offensive dogmatism of Mommsen, but his work unavoidably takes a shape in which the writer calls on his readers to take down a great deal simply because he says that it is so. Now this kind of treatment does thoroughly well for the geographical and other descriptive portions. The observer and describer is here himself an original authority, and we receive what he tells us as such. The same treatment may also suit a flowing narrative, where we have no reason to suspect the good faith and accuracy of the writer, or where, even if we have, his mere power of narration carries us away with him. But it does not at all suit a political

history like the early history of Greece and Italy. In those histories a great deal must depend upon conjecture, or at any rate upon inferences drawn from scattered notices, which allow of room for great varieties of opinion. In such cases we allow a reasonable deference to the opinion of a man who is evidently learned and thoughtful; but we refuse to pin our faith upon any one. We like to know, and we think we have a right to ask, a man's reasons and authorities for every one thing that he says. Mr. Grote fully satisfies this demand. He gives us full means of accepting or rejecting whatever he tells us. Curtius does not do so; not, we feel sure, from any lack of good will, but because the scheme of this part of his work hindered him. In this sort of case even the violence of Mommsen has an incidental advantage over his better-mannered colleague. We may not believe—perhaps we are even set against believing—but we at any rate understand and remember. We must confess that we have read a good deal of Curtius' political history, without carrying away anything in particular.

The point of greatest novelty in Curtius' work is that he has given us, as far as we know, the first History of Greece in which any attempt is made to connect Grecian history with the results both of Comparative Philology and of Eastern research. When Bishop Thirlwall wrote, those studies were hardly advanced enough to have been applied to Grecian history to much purpose, and, even when Mr. Grote wrote, they were far from being so advanced as they are now. The ethnological part of Bishop Thirlwall's history, what he has to say about Pelasgians and so forth, is certainly the least satisfactory part of his work. Mr. Grote, perhaps more prudently, throws the Pelasgians overboard altogether. In truth, the practical and political turn of Mr. Grote's mind is hardly suited for pure ethnological research. He thoroughly masters and clearly sets forth the historical and political relations of the various neighbouring nations to the Greeks; but for their exact relations, as a matter of race and speech, even to the Greeks, much more to one another, he seems to care very little. In one respect this tendency has done Mr. Grote's history a serious damage. It has combined with his position as the historian of Athenian Democracy to make him distinctly unfair to Alexander and to Macedonia in general. Now Curtius comes to his Grecian history thoroughly prepared with the last results of ethnological and philological study. This is a most valuable qualification, and it gives him so far a great advantage over both his English predecessors. We are not quite so clear about his Eastern studies. Purely Western scholars, classical or mediæval, have not yet made up their minds about the results of Egyptian and Assyrian research. They do not take upon themselves to reject what they have often had no opportunity of minutely examining. But they are by no means prepared implicitly to believe everything. They cannot help seeing that the Eastern scholars do not always seem to know their own minds, and they feel that they are constantly asked to believe statements about Egypt and Nineveh on evidence which they would not think enough for a statement about Athens or England. It is easy to see that Curtius' standard of belief is much laxer than that of Mr. Grote; much more then is it laxer than that of Sir George Lewis. He clearly holds that a good deal of history, the history of the successions of states and dynasties, if not of individuals, may be recovered out of mythical times. It is by no means our wish to say that no such history can be recovered, but we must confess that Curtius

sometimes goes on faster than we can follow him. It is rather a call on our faith to be asked to believe, if not in Minôs personally, at any rate in his *Thalassocracy*. The Pelopid dynasty at Mykênê is another thing; Homer and the existing monuments are two distinct kinds of evidence which corroborate and explain one another. Indeed our chief objection to Curtius' treatment of præhistoric times is that he believes a great deal which Homer implicitly contradicts. The Lydian origin of Pelops, the Egyptian origin of other Greek patriarchs, seem to us to be mere dreams of after-times, of which Homer had no knowledge. In the system of Curtius all these supposed immigrations play an important part.

It must not however be thought that Curtius is at all an advocate of the exploded notions of past days about purely barbarian settlements in Greece. He accepts from Niebuhr and Bunsen, but he works out in full for himself, the theory of extensive Hellenic or quasi-Hellenic colonization—though colonization is not exactly the right word—in præhistoric times. Greeks were spread over the Asiatic coast, and they had made settlements in various places, Egypt among them, ages before the date of that later Greek colonization which followed the Dorian migration. When the European Ionians settled in the Asiatic Ionia, they were but returning to an older Ionic land. The distance to which Greek colonies had spread in very early times is said to be shown by the occurrence of the Ionians—the *Uinim* of the Egyptians, the *Javan* of the Hebrews—among the subjects of the early Egyptian Kings. But then the Egyptologists are at loggerheads amongst themselves about the meaning of the inscription in which these early Uinim are said to be mentioned. What Lepsius admits, Bunsen rejects, and far be it from us to decide between them. Indeed for strictly Grecian history the point is not of much moment. As it is made use of by Curtius, the effect, if any, of this early connexion between Greece and Egypt must have been that a chance of improvement was offered to Egypt, of which Egypt, in true Egyptian fashion, made no use. Curtius asks us to believe that colonists from Lydia and Egypt settled in Peloponnêsos; but he does not ask us to believe that Lydian and Egyptian Barbarians settled there. His Lydians and Egyptians are Lydian and Egyptian Greeks. This is indeed somewhat of a relief, but it is surely simpler to cast aside these utterly unauthentic immigrations altogether.

We confess that we cannot always follow Curtius in detail in his speculations about what he calls Old-Ionians and the like. But this whole part of the book, especially what may be called the præhistoric history of Peloponnesus, is throughout most ingenious and interesting, and it is, in the original, set forth with a charm of style which some may perhaps have thought that neither the subject nor the German language admitted. And we should not have a word of complaint to make, if Curtius would be satisfied with our believing that the inhabitants of a large region from Sicily to Asia were closely allied to the Greeks, that the Greeks in settling among them were not settling among utter strangers, and that this original ethnical kindred accounts for the speedy, thorough, and in many places lasting, hellenization of those districts. This we believe to be one of the most certain, and one of the most important, facts in Grecian history. Round Greece Proper we find a circle of nations, neither strictly Greek nor strictly Barbarian, not Greek in the fuller sense, but capable of easy hellenization—half-developed Greeks, whom a slight intercourse with

their more advanced neighbours easily raised to their level. Such a quasi-Greek people we find in Epeiros, the original seat of the Greek name, and the scene of national migrations which Curtius has set forth in his best manner.

We will take a leap from the beginning of the present volume to the end. In all these inquiries, whether we agree with the author in every detail or not, Curtius is plainly in his element, and his treatment of all these matters is most masterly. He is, we think, less successful, because he is on ground which is less thoroughly his own, when he attempts to grapple with Mr. Grote on a point of the developement of the Athenian Democracy. We cannot think, with Curtius, that the lot came in with Kleisthenês. What is the evidence? On the one side is an *obiter dictum* of Herodotus, who is not examining into the matter; on the other side is a direct statement of Isokratês, who is examining into the matter, and also, as we think, the probability of the case.

## II.

The main strength of Curtius seems to us to lie, not so much in narrative, not so much in military or political history, as in drawing a picture of those other parts of the life of a nation which some historians neglect and which do not enter into the plan of others. The mere narrative power of Curtius, though by no means small, is hardly of the first order, and his way of dealing with political history is feeble by the side of Mr. Grote's. To Mr. Grote, with his political experience and his political views, the political life and development of Athens was a real and living thing in a way in which it can never be to a mere student. No other historian ever entered as Mr. Grote has entered into the real spirit of such a body as the Athenian Assembly; no one therefore has ever drawn so full and clear a picture of its nature. But on the other hand this greatest merit of Mr. Grote's work led directly to its greatest defect. His history is, after all his strivings to make it otherwise, Athenian rather than Hellenic, and this purely Athenian way of looking at things makes him unfair both to the earliest and to the latest ages of Greece. No charge of this sort can be brought against Curtius, and this though he has given a more full and vivid picture of Athens as a whole than Mr. Grote has. But then Curtius' picture of Athens as a whole is a picture of Athens as the intellectual centre of Greece, as the abode of art, philosophy, and inquiry of every sort, rather than as the great example of democratic freedom. Curtius in no way neglects the political history; we have little direct fault to find with his way of treating it, but it clearly has not been to him the same intense labour of love which it evidently was to Mr. Grote. The two great chapters in the present volume are undoubtedly those headed 'The Unity of Greece' and 'The Years of Peace.' They are the best pictures we ever saw of the general mind and life of Greece at the two dates fixed upon—at the time before the Persian War and in the age of Periklês. In both of these we find a great deal of matter, some of which is actually new, while much more is not to be found in other Histories of Greece, worked together with great skill, so as to make a vivid and interesting picture. The developement of Greek poetry, science, and art at the time when art and the later poetry had reached their highest point, is here set

forth in a full, clear, and connected way, such as we have never seen elsewhere. Curtius looks at all these matters with a thoroughly artistic eye; they are plainly the parts of his subject on which he best loves to dwell, and yet he never gives them any exaggerated importance or puts them in more than their proper relation to the general march of the history. This is a great point to have gained. Some writers and talkers, both on ancient Greece and mediæval Italy, have utterly wearied us with poets, artists, and philosophers, till we have sometimes been tempted to wish that neither Greece nor Italy had ever produced any poets, artists, or philosophers at all. Curtius never errs in this way. He never forgets that, if Athens did great things in the way of literature and art, it was only by virtue of her position of a great and free city that she was enabled to do so. Curtius has ever before his eyes the memorable words of Periklês himself, how to make Athens the school and ornament of Greece was a distinct part of his plans, but a plan conceived with a definite political object, and one which really had important political results. In this point of view, the architectural splendours of the Akropolis, the dramatic splendours of the Dionysiac Festivals, are clothed with a twofold interest. They have an interest strictly their own, and they have a still higher interest as parts of the political system and the general life of the great Democracy. This Curtius always bears in mind, and we look on it as the greatest merit of this part of his History that he has done so.

Somewhat of the same nature is the earlier general chapter, headed 'The Unity of Greece.' This chapter is, in effect, a picture of Greek religion as distinguished from Greek mythology. There are some things in it which startle us somewhat, some things for which we should have been well pleased to have fuller references, some things which we should ask for longer time before we either accept or reject. But it is a chapter at once most interesting and most suggestive, which supplies abundant materials for thought, and which contains many propositions that commend themselves at once to our acceptance. One great point on which Curtius insists is the importance of religious and sacred rites, above all of the Delphic temple and oracle, in the formation of Greek national life. He skilfully and elaborately traces out the effects of the position of Delphoi and the growth of the importance of the oracle as the religious centre of Greece. We are not sure that he does not sometimes press matters too far, and clothe Apollôn with even greater authority than really belonged to him; still there is nothing that he says which does not at least deserve to be most carefully weighed. At the very outset he clearly sets forth the influence which the Apollôn worship had on the process by which the Hellênes disentangled themselves, so to speak, from among the mass of neighbouring and kindred tribes and stood forth, not indeed as a political unit, but still as a nation in every higher sense of the word. He then goes on to point out the importance of Dorian influences upon the developement of Delphoi. It was of course the great Dorian Migration and Conquest of Peloponnêsos which mainly extended the influence and authority of Delphi, but this extension was merely a development of a connexion which began at an earlier period, when the Dorians first settled at the foot of Parnassos.

## III.

We have remarked in notices of his earlier volumes that Curtius' way of dealing with the strictly political side of his subject was by no means equal to his way of dealing with the more artistic and general side of it. The deficiency comes out yet more strongly in the latter part of the second volume of the German original, which takes in the history of the Peloponnesian War. The treatment of this part of the history is the most memorable thing in Mr. Grote's work. We by no means profess ourselves unreserved followers of all Mr. Grote's views. He is throughout a partizan, the champion of a side. The Athenian Democracy is to him as a party or a country, and he says all that is to be said for it. We read what he says, not as the sentence of a judge, but as the pleading of an advocate; but it is a great thing to have the pleading of such an advocate. We may not be prepared to go all Mr. Grote's lengths on every matter, but we should have thought that no reader of Mr. Grote ever shut up his book in exactly the same frame of mind in which he opened it. If he does not think exactly as Mr. Grote does about Sophists and Demagogues, about Kleôn and Kleophôn, he will not think exactly the same about them as he did when he began. He will at least have seen that there is another side to a great many things of which he had hitherto only looked at one side. And even if we admit that Mr. Grote, besides his political bias, has a certain love of novelty for its own sake, such a tendency on his particular subject does much more good than harm. Our knowledge of Grecian history comes from a very few original sources. The mass of so-called classical writers are no more original sources than Grote and Curtius are; their only value is that they wrote with original sources before them which are now lost. A writer under the Roman Empire had far better means than a modern scholar of getting at the facts of Greek republican history, but he had not nearly such good means of forming a judgement on those facts as the modern scholar has. He lived in an age which, in point of time, in language, in all outward circumstances, came much nearer to the time of which he wrote than our own time does. But in real fellow-feeling for the earlier time, in real power of understanding it, a writer of the age of Plutarch was further removed from the age of Thucydides than we are. And he had not the same habit of drawing historical analogies as the modern scholar, nor had he the same wide field of historical experience to seek his analogies in. And a writer of the age of Plutarch was really all the further removed from the age of Thucydides, because the great men of that age had in his day already grown into a sort of canonized heroes. A conventional way of looking at Grecian history therefore grew up very early; the same statements, tinged by this conventional view, were repeated over and over again from so-called classical times to our own day, till Grecian history, instead of a living thing of flesh and blood, became a collection of formulæ, of misunderstood models, and of sentiments fit only for a child's copy-book. Mitford, with all his blunders and all his unfairness, did good service in showing that Plutarch's men were real human beings like ourselves. The calm judgement and consummate scholarship of Bishop Thirlwall came in to correct, sometimes a little too unmercifully, the mistakes and perversions of Mitford. But it was Mr. Grote who first thoroughly

tested our materials, who first looked straight at everything, without regard to conventional beliefs, by the light of his own historical and political knowledge. Bishop Thirlwall had clearly drawn the line between primary and secondary authorities. Mr. Grote went further, by hinting that primary authorities themselves are not infallible. We may or we may not agree with Mr. Grote's strictures on Thucydides in the matter of Amphipolis or in the matter of Kleôn; still it is a useful thing to be reminded that Thucydides was, after all, a fallible human being; that, in a matter which touched himself personally, he gave his own view on the matter, and that there was most likely something to be said on the other side. We read Mr. Grote with a respectful freedom, and we use our own judgement upon each detail of his conclusions. But we feel that his work is the great landmark in the study of Grecian history. He has done a work which had never been done before him, and which can never be done again.

With these feelings we turn to Curtius, and we find with regret that, in the most important points, he is simply *præ-Grotian*. He has his own sphere in which he rises far above Mr. Grote, or, more truly, he has a sphere in which Mr. Grote has no part or lot whatever. But, after all, the highest side of history is its political side; its highest object is to set man before us in his highest character as a member of a free state. It is here that Mr. Grote has shown his pre-eminent qualifications, his power of bringing his practical knowledge of public life to bear upon wide reading and deep thought. It is here that Curtius altogether breaks down. He does not enter with any spirit into either military or political events; he can give a brilliant picture of a country or of a city, but he has very little power of giving a lifelike narrative of a campaign or a debate. The greater part of Mr. Grote's views, whether we call them theories or discoveries, are passed by without any notice. Curtius speaks of the Demagogues and the Sophists pretty much as if Mr. Grote had never written. Of course it may be that he has come to different conclusions from Mr. Grote, but is hindered by the scale of his work from entering on the grounds of his conclusions. But it will hardly apply to his treatment of two or three of the most remarkable passages of the history which come towards the end of the present volume. Every reader of Mr. Grote, indeed every reader of Xenophôn, must have admired the heroic character of Kallikratidas, the man who had the lofty courage to run counter to the evil habit of the whole Greek nation and to declare that no Greek should be sold into slavery by his act. The words stand out even in the bald narrative of Xenophôn; *οὐκ ἔφη, ἑαυτοῦ γε ἄρχοντος, οὐδένα Ἑλλήνων ἐς τοὐκείνου δυνατὸν ἀνδραποδισθῆναι*. Mr. Grote's comments on the 'grandeur and sublimity of this proceeding,' 'unparalleled in Grecian history,' carry him beyond himself. No one, we should have thought, could have forgotten his picture of 'Kallikratidas, unfortunately only shown by the Fates and not suffered to continue in the Grecian world.' We turn to Curtius, and we are told how great a man Kallikratidas was, how he united the merits both of a Spartan and of an Athenian ('Er vereinigte in seltenster Weise den hochherzigen und stolzen Sinn eines Altspartäners mit der Thatkraft und Gewandtheit, wie sie der Beruf eines Flottenführers in Ionien verlangte'), but he leaves out this most signal example of his rising high above either character. Mêthymna is taken—*αἱρεῖ κατὰ κράτος* according to Xenophôn, 'sie musste sich ergeben' according to Curtius—but the striking scene that follows, the demand

of the allies for the sale of the prisoners, the refusal of Kallikratidas, the magnanimous declaration which gladdens Mr. Grote's heart, find no place in Curtius's narrative. A little time before Mr. Grote had dwelled at some length on the circumstances of the battle of Notion, which led to the final disgrace of Alkibiadês. Alkibiadês left the Athenian fleet in command of Antiochos, forbidding him to fight with Lysandros—*μὴ ἐπιπλεῖν ἐπὶ τὰς Λυσάνδρου ναῦς.* This Antiochos was no qualified commander at all, but the pilot of Alkibiadês' own ship, and a personal favourite of his. Xenophôn simply calls him *τὸν αὐτοῦ κυβερνήτην*; Plutarch adds that he was *ἀγαθὸς κυβερνήτης, ἀνόητος δὲ τἆλλα καὶ φορτικός.* In Curtius he becomes 'einer der trefflichsten Schiffsführer.' This Antiochos, thus put in a post for which he was utterly unfit, challenged Lysandros in a way which was simply frantic, and the defeat of Notion followed. On this the Athenians deprived Alkibiadês of his command, *οἰόμενοι δι' ἀμέλειάν τε καὶ ἀκράτειαν ἀπολωλεκέναι τὰς ναῦς*, says Xenophôn; and Plutarch adds that he was charged with neglecting his duties for banquets and the company of Ionian women. His removal from his command of course forms the ground for one of the stock charges of ingratitude against the Athenian people. Mr. Grote argues with great power that the removal was fully deserved, that Alkibiadês left the fleet when he ought to have been with it, and left it in the hands of one who was quite unfit to command it. He was therefore responsible for the disasters into which his unworthy representative led it. Now why did Alkibiadês leave the fleet? The contemporary Xenophôn gives an account which by itself is quite unintelligible; *ἀκούσας Θρασύβουλον ἔξω Ἑλλησπόντου ἥκοντα τειχίζειν Φωκαίαν, διέπλευσε πρὸς αὐτόν.* Plutarch makes him go *ἀργυρολογήσων ἐπὶ Καρίας.* Diodôros sends him to Klazomenai; but Mr. Grote works in a story which Diodôros gives two chapters afterwards about Alkibiadês attacking Kymê, a town in alliance with Athens, on which the Kymaians very naturally sent a charge to Athens against him. Curtius tells us, 'Es war eine Ehrenschuld des Alkibiades, Ionien, dessen Abfall sein Werk war, den Athenern wieder zu verschaffen.' He therefore leaves the fleet with Antiochos, 'während er selbst bei Phokaia den Eroberungskrieg begann, der natürlich darauf berechnet war, dass ein Flottensieg den Feldzug eröffnen und sein Gelingen erleichtern sollte.' It is hard to see all this in any of the Greek writers, and we certainly hold with Mr. Grote that no case is made out to excuse Alkibiadês for leaving the fleet in the care of a man so incompetent as Antiochos, especially when such an enemy as Lysandros was near. But Curtius makes the following wonderful comment, 'Alkibiades war ohne Schuld an diesem Unglücke; auch Antiochos trug sie nicht allein. Denn er hatte allen Schiffen Befehl gegeben, sich kampfbereit zu halten, und dieser Befehl war nicht befolgt worden.' We do not know what this last sentence means, but what excuse can there be for an officer who disobeys the direct commands of his chief, and disobeys them in a way which, if he had been himself in command, would have been simple madness? Antiochos met with a fate too good for him by dying in the battle. But certainly nothing could be more just than the sentence which the Athenian people pronounced upon Alkibiadês. Now our charge against Curtius is, not simply that he differs from Mr. Grote, which, when he has a good reason for so doing, he is perfectly right to do; but that he seems to have made absolutely no use of Mr. Grote on a matter which Mr. Grote has made thoroughly clear, and still more that, as it seems to us,

his own statements are, setting Mr. Grote quite aside, not borne out by his Greek authorities. Good books, as we have been lately told with much solemnity, may commonly be written in German, but in this case we venture to think that the better book is written in English.

Here then is more than one passage in Curtius's History in which we hold that Mr. Grote's treatment far surpasses his in judgement and accuracy. We have another passage to speak of, in which Curtius distinctly calls Mr. Grote's views in question, and in doing so shows that he altogether misunderstands them. This is with regard to the treatment of the Generals after the battle of Arginousai. Of this matter we have two accounts, that of Xenophôn and that of Diodôros, besides a few allusions in Lysias and in Xenophôn himself at a later stage. Xenophôn is contemporary, but his account is thoroughly unsatisfactory and unfair on the face of it. This is allowed even by those who, like Bishop Thirlwall, are inclined to put more faith in it than Mr. Grote does. Diodôros wrote long after, and he was thoroughly stupid and careless, but he had original writers before him whom we have not. The allusions in Lysias and in the later speech of Thêramenês in Xenophôn himself are incidental allusions in the speeches of orators, and every student of Grecian history knows how often such allusions are quite inaccurate, even when made very soon after the events. And inaccuracy of this kind is certainly not confined to Athenian debates. Our materials then, though fairly full, are by no means good in quality, and we must make use of our own judgements upon them. One thing however is perfectly plain, that the sentence by which the Generals died was monstrously illegal. All the forms of Athenian jurisprudence were trampled under foot. By Athenian law each man ought to have been tried separately before a sworn court; he ought to have been heard in his own defence, and to have been convicted or acquitted by a vote of the judges which touched himself only. Instead of this, the whole body of accused men were condemned by a single vote of the unsworn Assembly, and they were not heard in their own defence, except so far as some at least of them had spoken on the subject in an earlier debate. The Generals in short died by a Bill of Attainder, very much like those which gladden the heart of Mr. Froude. It is perfectly plain that, if any of us had been present in the Assembly, we should have voted against the proposal of the Senate and for the amendment of Euryptolemos, who demanded that the Generals should be fairly tried according to law. But this does not at all prove whether, if we had sat on a court for trying any one of the Generals, we should have acquitted or convicted him. These two questions are perfectly distinct; but Mr. Grote seems to be the only writer who thoroughly distinguishes them. The utter injustice of the vote by which the Generals died is plain on any showing, and Mr. Grote asserts it as strongly as any man. But as to the circumstances which led the People to this unhappy vote, as to the probable guilt or innocence of the Generals themselves, our accounts are confused and contradictory, and it is not wonderful if different readers of the story come to different conclusions. Mr. Grote comes to one conclusion; Curtius or any other man has a perfect right to come to another. Mr. Grote does not see any elaborate oligarchical plots on the part of Thêramenês for the destruction of the Generals or of anybody else; he looks on the People as led away by overpowering family feelings. He points out—what many have failed to see, though Curtius does see it—that what the Generals were charged with

was not merely neglecting to take up dead bodies for burial—though that alone, according to Greek religious ideas, was a heinous crime—but leaving their wounded and drowning comrades to perish. Mr. Grote too accepts as genuine the lamentations and accusations of the kinsfolk of the forsaken men, who are commonly represented as being no kinsfolk at all, or at any rate as being stirred up and bribed by Thêramenês. Xenophôn mentions that certain mourners appeared; so does Diodôros. But Xenophôn adds, while Diodôros does not, that these mourners were not real mourners, but people set to work by Thêramenês. Mr. Grote shows the impossibility of this story in itself. Besides this, the appearance of the mourners was a fact about which there could be no doubt; that they were bribed by Thêramenês was a surmise, about which Xenophôn or anybody else might be mistaken, and which the writers whom Diodôros followed did not accept. So again a certain man came forward (*παρῆλθε*) in the Assembly, saying that he had, in the wreck, saved himself on a meal-tub, &c. &c. Till Mr. Grote wrote, every modern writer represented this man also as an instrument of Thêramenês. He was 'produced,' 'brought forward,' and the like—'wurde endlich auch ein Mann *vorgeführt*,' as Curtius has it—though no such meaning can be got out of *παρῆλθε*. As to the guilt of the Generals and the guilt of Thêramenês, all that we can say is that Mr. Grote and Curtius come to different conclusions. Our own conclusion, if it is worth anything, would be that some of the Generals were guilty, and some innocent; whether the guilty ought to have been punished with death is a question of Athenian law and feeling, which is hard to settle at this distance of time. But it is hardly fair in Curtius to leave out of sight that we cannot condemn Thêramenês so strongly as he does, without in some degree also condemning Thrasyboulos, who clearly had a share, although a less prominent one, in the first accusation. But it is really too bad to say, as Curtius does, after quoting a work unluckily unknown to us, Herbst's *Die Schlacht bei den Arginusen*:—

'In dieser Schrift ist gegen Grote's Versuch, das Verfahren der Bürgerschaft zu rechtfertigen und die Feldherren als schuldig darzustellen, das richtige Sachverhältniss entwickelt, wie es sich aus Xenophon ergiebt. X. gegenüber kann Diod. xiii. 101 keine Autorität sein und es ist unstatthaft, Theramenes Verfahren als eine nothgedrungene Selbstvertheidigung zu enschuldigen.'

Now Herbst may possibly have refuted Mr. Grote on any of the points which are open to controversy. He may have proved the innocence of all the Generals; he may have shown that Thêramenês bribed the supposed mourners or even the man who said that he had escaped on the meal-tub; but he cannot have refuted any attempt of Mr. Grote's to justify the proceedings of the Assembly, because no such attempt was ever made. Mr. Grote as distinctly condemns the doings of the Assembly as Curtius or Herbst can do. On the very heading of one of his pages may be read the words 'Causes of the unjust sentence.' In his text he speaks of the 'temporary burst of wrong,' of the 'enormity' of the proposal of the Senate, of its 'breaking through the established constitutional maxims and judicial practices of the Athenian democracy,' of its 'depriving the Generals of all fair trial,' and of the 'well-merited indignation' with which 'it was heard by a large portion of the Assembly.' It was an 'illegal and unconstitutional proposition;' the Athenians 'dishonoured themselves;' 'under a momentary ferocious excitement they rose in insurrec-

tion not less against the forms of their own democracy than against the most sacred restraints of their habitual constitutional morality.' We do not see what stronger language Herbst can have used, or what stronger language Curtius can have wished any one to use ; and it is hard indeed, when Mr. Grote has expressed himself so plainly, that he should be charged, in a sort of passing contemptuous sneer, with having defended what he most righteously condemned. The truth plainly is that Curtius has neither the same political instincts nor the same knowledge of human nature as Mr. Grote. He seemingly cannot understand that a sentence may be utterly monstrous both in a legal and a moral point of view, and yet that the persons condemned may not be wholly free from blame.

We have thought it right to point out these things clearly, because there seems every chance that Curtius may depose Grote, and we believe that such a deposition would be a great evil. In all these political matters Curtius is behind his generation ; he is behind the generation to which Mr. Grote has explained so many matters which before were dark. But even in this matter of the condemnation of the Generals, we may mention one point of detail in which we think that Curtius has the better of Grote. Mr. Grote rejects, on grounds which seem to us very inconclusive, the speech which Diodôros puts into the mouth of Diomedôn as he is led to execution. Curtius silently accepts it. But an incidental advantage like this goes for little when the whole story is so completely misconceived.

Nearly the same objections will apply to Curtius's treatment of most of the subjects in which he comes into collision with Mr. Grote ; that is to say, of most of the political questions which arise during the Peloponnesian War. We cannot express our feeling better than by saying that Curtius is behindhand, *præ-Grotian*. He writes with the notions and prejudices of a time which we thought had passed away. But there are better things in the present volume than these. What Curtius does grasp, no man can set forth more clearly or effectively. His picture of Periklês is thoroughly well done; so is his general narrative of Sicilian affairs. Both these subjects carry us a little out of the beaten track of Athenian politics. This may seem a strange thing to say of the great organizer of Athenian Democracy. But if Periklês was the organizer of the Athenian Democracy, he was many other things as well. He stands out as a man so completely by himself that questions about the exact nature of his dealings with the Areiopagos or with the law courts seem of secondary moment. Into the many sides of the character of Periklês Curtius thoroughly enters, and he works them up into a portrait in his best style. So again, Sicily, the island which so largely filled Greek imagination, with its cities and their revolutions, with its ancient legends and its contending races, a land which to the dweller within the ordinary range of Greek history is a land half familiar and half unaccustomed, supplies Curtius with a far better field for his peculiar powers than he finds in the everyday walk of the Athenian commonwealth. Curtius could, it strikes us, have given us a series of monographs of Greek subjects of brilliant excellence ; many particular parts of his subject he has treated as they have never been treated before; but the continuous march of Greek political and military events is not his strong point, and, in attempting them, he falls, to our thinking, far below the level of either of our great English historians.

# V.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

*History of Greece.* By George Grote, Esq. Vol. XII. London: 1856.

Mr. Grote has fixed the end of his great work at an earlier point than we could have wished. It is indeed that which he chose at the beginning of his labours; but we had hoped that he might be led to think over the matter again, and not to lay down his pen till he had traced the history of Grecian freedom down to its final overthrow. As it is, he contents himself with tracing the decline of Athenian independence down to its lowest pitch of degradation. The historian of the great Democracy cannot bring himself to go on with his labours in times when Athens vanishes into political insignificance, and when the main interest of the drama gathers around kingly Macedonia and federal Achaia. His contempt for the 'Greece of Polybios,' we must confess, surprises us. The Greece of Polybios stands indeed very far below the Greece of Thucydides; but it is still Greece, still living Greece, Greece still free and republican. It was indeed but a recovered freedom which it enjoyed, a freedom less perfect, less enduring, than that of the elder time; but it was still, as Pausanias calls it, a new shoot from the old trunk.* But Mr. Grote has turned away with something of disdain from a subject which we think is worthy of him, and which we are sure that no other man living is

* *Ὅτε δὴ καὶ μόγις, ἅτε ἐκ δένδρου λελωβημένου καὶ εὐθὺ τὰ πλείονα, ἀνεβλάστησεν ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος τὸ Ἀχαϊκόν*, vii. 17. 2. Mr. Grote himself quotes the passage, xii. 527.

so fit to treat. Excellently as it has been dealt with by Bishop Thirlwall, there is still something to be added from Mr. Grote's own special point of view. No one could have so well compared the Achaian institutions with those of earlier and of later commonwealths. Mr. Grote is strongly anti-Macedonian, but we should have expected that his very dislike of Macedonia would have led him to look with special interest on the revolution which freed so large a part of Greece from Macedonian bondage. It is indeed strange to find Mr. Grote dismissing, in two or three contemptuous lines, the revival and the final struggles of that Hellenic liberty which is so dear to him. And strange too we think it, in so careful an observer of the affairs of Switzerland, to pay so little heed to one of the first and most successful attempts to solve the great problem of Federal Government.

With regard to the Macedonian aspect of the subject, we must confess that we hold a different opinion. Mr. Grote is admirably fitted to be the historian of Achaia; he is not so well fitted to be the historian of Macedonia. Indeed, in the present volume and in the one next before it, he has given us a history of Macedonia in its most brilliant period, which we cannot but look upon as the least satisfactory part of his noble work. Mr. Grote's History is so great a work that some points fairly open to discussion could not fail to be found in it. He puts forth so much that is new and startling that he must be prepared for a certain amount of dissent even among admirers who study him in his own spirit. And we ourselves have so often set forth our admiration for his general treatment of his subject, we have borne such full and willing witness to all that Mr. Grote has done for the truth of history, that we have fairly earned the right to dispute any special point, however important. Such a special point of controversy we find in his treatment of the history of Macedonia, and especially of its greatest sovereign. From Mr. Grote's view of Alexander the Great, we respectfully but very widely dissent, and our present object is to set forth our reasons for so dissenting.

Mr. Grote has many claims on the gratitude of the historical student; but it is as the historian of the Athenian Democracy that his claims are highest and most enduring. In that character he has won abiding fame. He has grappled with popular errors: he has put forth truths which, but for the weighty arguments with which he has supported them, would have been at once cast aside as paradoxes. He has justified ostracism; he has found something to say for Kleôn; he has shown that, even in the condemnation of Sôkratês, though the People erred and erred deeply, yet their error was natural and almost pardonable. Dêmos is the darling of his affections; he watches him from his cradle, and forsakes him only when he has sunk into a second childhood from which no Sausage-seller on earth could call him up again. Now it was by Macedonian hands that this cherished object was trampled down, degraded, corrupted, well nigh wiped out from the list of independent states. That Mr. Grote should be perfectly fair to Macedonia and Macedonians would have been too much to hope for. But the result is that Mr. Grote, in this part of his history, sinks far below the level of his great predecessor. Bishop Thirlwall's narrative of this period it would indeed be hard to outdo. The clear and vivid narrative, the critical appreciation of evidence, the thorough impartiality which can fully sympathize with the cause of Athens and yet yield all due honour to Alexander and even to Philip, all are here in the pages of Bishop Thirlwall, but they are not found in those of Mr. Grote. Alexander, with him, becomes a vulgar destroyer, a mere slaughterer of men. He overthrows Greece and Persia alike, and founds nothing in their stead. That Philip and Alexander put an end to the brightest glory and fullest independence of Greece, cannot be gainsaid. But it is another thing when Mr. Grote deals with them as mere barbarian invaders, as aggressors as thoroughly external as Darius and Xerxes. Whether the claims which Philip and Alexander made to a Hellenic character for themselves or their people were just or unjust, it was only under that Hellenic character that they took on them

the dominion of Hellas. That their conquests brought a large portion of the world within the pale, not indeed of Greek political city-freedom, but of Greek social life and intellectual culture, can as little be gainsaid as anything that is said against them. And it is surely not unreasonable to believe that Alexander looked forward to such a result, and that he adapted means to such an end. In our view, Alexander founded a great deal. He founded the civilization of Alexandria and Constantinople. He founded the modern Greek nation. On such a point as this, Mr. Finlay, who fully appreciates the great Macedonian, is a better judge than Mr. Grote. To the one Alexander is the end of his subject; to the other he is its beginning. Yet even here, where we think that his judgement is thoroughly warped, we must bear our thankful testimony to Mr. Grote's careful and conscientious collation of every statement and every authority. In this he presents throughout a most honourable contrast to another great writer who shares his view of the subject. Niebuhr's Lectures on the age of Philip and Alexander are throughout conceived in the spirit of the too famous oration of Kallisthenês.* Everything Macedonian is brought in only to be reviled. Every recorded scandal against Alexander is eagerly seized upon, without regard to the evidence on which it rests. Even for actions which the whole world has hitherto agreed to admire Niebuhr is always ready to find out some unworthy motive. And all is put forth with overbearing dogmatism, on the mere *ipse dixit* of Barthold Niebuhr. Wholly unlike this is the conduct of Mr. Grote. Even here his laborious honesty never fails him. Mr. Grote does not refuse, even to a Macedonian, the right, no less Macedonian than Athenian, of being heard before he is condemned. The evidence is, as ever with Mr. Grote, fully and fairly marshalled; the reader who has not gone through the original authorities for himself is put in a position to dissent, if he pleases, from the decision of the judge. Hardly ever does Mr. Grote fail to bring forward the passages which tell

* Οὐ τῆς δεινότητος ὁ Καλλισθένης, ἀλλὰ τῆς δυσμενείας Μακεδόσιν ἀπόδειξιν δέδωκε. Plut. Alex. 53.

most strongly against his own view. He believes much against Alexander which we hold that the evidence does not warrant: but he never invents scandal or attributes motives after the manner of Niebuhr.* Niebuhr is simply incapable of understanding a hero; Mr. Grote merely fails to rise to the heroic point of fully appreciating an enemy. With Niebuhr, Alexander becomes a monster instead of a man; with Mr. Grote he becomes at the worst a Barbarian instead of a Greek. In short, Niebuhr is, in this case, a mere reckless calumniator; Mr. Grote is simply one who, after weighing a mass of conflicting authorities, has come to a conclusion less favourable to Alexander of Macedon than we ourselves have come to after weighing the same authorities.

Of the life of Alexander we have five consecutive narratives, besides numerous allusions and fragments scattered up and down various Greek and Latin writers. Of these last, the greatest in number and the most curious in detail are to be found in the strange miscellany of Athênaios; but the most really valuable are due to the judicious and accurate Strabo. Of our five writers, Arrian and Quintus Curtius have given us separate histories of the great conqueror. The work of Arrian has come down to us whole, with the exception of a single gap. In the work of Curtius there are several such gaps, and the whole of his two first books are wanting. Plutarch has devoted to Alexander one of his longest biographies; Diodôros bestows on him a whole book of his Universal History; Justin gives a shorter narrative in his abridgement of Trogus Pompeius. But we have again to regret a very considerable gap in the narrative of Diodôros, which however is partially supplied by the headings of the chapters being preserved.

Here, it might be thought, are authorities enough; but unluckily, among all the five, there is not a single contemporary chronicler. All five write at secondhand; the earliest of

* [Of these Lectures of Niebuhr's something more will be found in the next Essay.]

them writes about three centuries after Alexander's death. The value of all, it is clear, must depend upon the faithfulness with which they represent the earlier writings which they had before them, and upon the amount of critical power which they may have brought to bear upon their examination. Unluckily again, among all the five, one only has any claim to the name of a critic. Arrian alone seems to have had at once the will and power to exercise a discreet judgement upon the statements of those who went before him. Diodôros we believe to be perfectly honest, but he is, at the same time, impenetrably stupid. Plutarch, as he himself tells us, does not write history, but lives; his object is rather to gather anecdotes, to point a moral, than to give a formal narrative of political and military events. Justin is a feeble and careless epitomizer. Quintus Curtius is, in our eyes, little better than a romance-writer; he is the only one of the five whom we should suspect of any wilful departure from the truth.

The contemporary historians of Alexander's exploits were by no means few, but most of them seem to have been of very inferior character. His own generation gave birth to no Thucydides, and the next to no Herodotus. Both Arrian and Strabo * constantly complain of the contradictions in their statements, and of the way in which most of them trifled with their subject. They tell us of their wild fables, their gross exaggerations, their constant sacrifice of truth to effect. Kleitarchos, Onêsikritos, Hêgêsias, the unfortunate Kallisthenês, all have a very bad name among later writers. Even Charês of Mytilênê, though an author of higher character, has handed down to us some very doubtful statements. Some seem to have been wilful liars †; others were

* Οὐδὲ τοῖς περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου δὲ συγγράψασιν ῥᾴδιον πιστεύειν τοῖς πολλοῖς, κ.τ.λ. Strabo, xi. 6 (vol. ii. p. 424, Tauchnitz). Δηλοῦσι δὲ μάλιστα τοῦτο οἱ τὰς Ἀλεξάνδρου πράξεις ἀναγράψαντες, προστιθέντες μὲν πολὺ καὶ τὸ τῆς κολακείας εἶδος. xvii. 1 (vol. iii. p. 459).

† Such at least seems to have been Strabo's judgement of Onêsikritos, xv. 1 (vol. iii. p. 269). Ὀνησίκριτος, ὃν οὐκ Ἀλεξάνδρου μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν παραδόξων ἀρχικυβερνήτην προσείποι τις ἄν· πάντες μὲν γάρ οἱ περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἀντὶ τἀληθοῦς ἀπεδέχοντο μᾶλλον· ὑπερβάλλεσθαι δὲ δοκεῖ τοὺς τοσούτους ἐκεῖνος τῇ τερατολογίᾳ.

nothing worse than dreaming pedants, whose accounts of military and political affairs seemed ridiculous to practical men like Polybios and Arrian.

Of the guides that we have, it is plain that Diodôros and Curtius drew largely from the same sources, but they do not often quote their authorities. Of these two, Diodôros, we have no doubt, honestly repeated what he found in his books, as far as he understood it; but he had not the slightest critical power to judge between one statement and another. In fact, as we find from his narrative of times when we are better able to test him, he could not always grasp the meaning of a plain story when it was set before him. Curtius, whoever he was and whenever he lived, was a man of far higher powers. Like Livy, he tells his tale to perfection as a mere matter of rhetoric. But then rhetoric is all that he has to give us; his constant sacrifice of everything to oratorical display, his palpable blunders in history and geography, his manifest exaggerations, his love of the wonderful and the horrible wherever he can find them—all show that he represents the most extravagant and inaccurate among the earlier writers; they even suggest the thought that a great deal may in truth come from his own imagination. In fact, in reading Curtius, we feel that we are already on the road to the wild romance of the false Kallisthenês, and to the yet stranger imaginings of the Eastern historians. It is highly dangerous to accept any statement on his witness alone.*

The object of Plutarch, as we have already said, was anecdote or biography rather than history. He may therefore fairly be judged by a less severe standard that any of the other writers. And certainly, of the two, we look far more favourably upon the anecdotes of Plutarch than upon the marvels of Curtius. We are far from accepting them in the

* Curtius, we suspect, was capable of better things. He once or twice (see ix. 5. 21) attempts criticism; he once really gives us a piece of it. There was a tale that Alexander once caused Lysimachos, the future King, to be exposed to a lion. Curtius acutely finds the origin of the fable in an encounter between Lysimachos and a lion at a hunting-party in Alexander's presence (viii. 1. 17).

mass as literal facts. Anecdotes are easy to invent and easier to improve; indeed the man is a sort of martyr to truthfulness who can withstand the temptation of making a good story still better. But, for an anecdote to pass current at all, it must have a kind of truth. It must have a certain degree of probability; it must at least be the kind of thing which might have happened, even if it never actually did happen. Stories of this kind may therefore generally be accepted as throwing light upon the character of the persons of whom they speak. Plutarch, again, is more valuable than Curtius or Diodôros, from his frequent references to his authorities. Among these he often refers to one source of information which would be the highest of all, could we only feel sure of its genuineness, namely, the private letters of Alexander himself. Of the letters which claimed to be Alexander's we should like to know more than we can find out from Plutarch's occasional quotations. It is well known that letters are easily forged, and that they often were forged in those times. We cannot therefore look upon these documents, which seem to have been unknown to Arrian,* with any great measure of trust. At most they can only be looked on as one source of knowledge among others.

Arrian, as he himself tells us, chose the two narratives of Ptolemy and Aristoboulos as the groundwork of his own.

* Arrian indeed (vii. 23, 9) refers to a letter sent by Alexander to Kleomenês, his Satrap in Egypt; but he merely works its contents into his narrative, as if he had read in Ptolemy or Aristoboulos that such a letter was sent. Had he known and believed in the collection of epistles referred to by Plutarch, he would surely have placed them above either of his favourite authorities.

Bishop Thirlwall (vol vii. p. 386) argues in favour of the genuineness of one of the letters quoted by Plutarch, that it is 'placed beyond doubt by its direction [*Κρατερῷ καὶ Ἀττάλῳ καὶ Ἀλκέτᾳ*], which would not have occurred to a forger.' Surely this turns upon the skill of the forger and the means of knowledge at his command.

Strabo (xv. 1; vol. iii. p. 275, Tauchnitz) quotes a letter from Krateros to his mother, which may belong to the same collection. Either the letter must have been a forgery, or Krateros must have been a liar of the first order. Strabo himself calls it *ἐπιστολὴν πολλά τε ἄλλα παράδοξα φράζουσαν καὶ οὐχ ὁμολογοῦσαν οὐδενί*. It makes Alexander reach the Ganges.

Both, he tells us, were companions of Alexander; both wrote after his death, when they had nothing to hope or to fear from him: Ptolemy moreover was a King, in whom falsehood would be specially unlikely. We do not profess to share Arrian's ultra-royalism on this last head; but we think that we can see good reasons for placing Ptolemy among our most trustworthy authorities. On two occasions, when his name was honourably put forward by other writers—probably his own flatterers—he himself disclaimed all merit. When Alexander received his famous wound among the Malli, Ptolemy, according to some stories, was one of those who first came to his help. According to Ptolemy himself, he was in command of another division of the army in another part of the country.* In the like sort, according to Diodôros and Curtius, Ptolemy was once wounded by a poisoned arrow, and the means of relief were revealed to Alexander in a vision. As Arrian speaks of nothing of the kind, we may infer that Ptolemy spoke of nothing either:† for the tale was one which, had it rested on any tolerable evidence, Arrian would not have been inclined to cast aside. For Arrian, like Pausanias, was a devout pagan, and he loved tales of omens and prodigies, which he sometimes tells at disproportionate length. But he is quite free from that general love of exaggerated and horrible stories which is so rife among the inferior writers. It was doubtless the sober and practical tone of the narratives of Ptolemy and Aristoboulos, as contrasted with the monstrous fables of Onêsikritos and Kleitarchos, which led him to follow them before all others.

We hold then that Arrian ought to be our chief guide; and yet we can grant to Mr. Grote that his silence does not always absolutely set a statement aside. But our reason is not quite the same as Mr. Grote's. The other writers often contain stories to the discredit of Alexander, which are not found in Arrian. Mr. Grote infers that the other writers preserved the truth, which was kept back by Ptolemy and

* Arrian, vi. 11.

† See Ste Croix, p. 409.

Aristoboulos, in their zeal for Alexander's good name. Archdeacon Williams of Cardigan, on the other hand, will have it that the writers of what he calls 'republican Greece' did nothing but invent tales to the disparagement of the royal Macedonian. This phantasy has been tossed to the winds by the stronger hand of his Diocesan.* The mass of Greek writers, at all events of later Greek writers, certainly did not run down Alexander either as a King or as a Macedonian. They had got over their hatred of Kings, and they had learned to look on Macedonians as Greeks. The chief vice which Strabo lays to their charge, is not depreciation, but flattery and love of the marvellous. And no small appetite they do indeed show for the extravagant, the horrible, and the scandalous. Among all this, Alexander of course comes in for his share; but so do his enemies likewise. Deeds of wrong are laid to the charge of both which most likely neither of them ever did. But on the other hand, it is not necessary to believe that Ptolemy and Aristoboulos were such formal apologists for Alexander as Mr. Grote seems to take for granted. To suppose that they wilfully left out Alexander's crimes implies that they looked on them as crimes. But there is no reason to give Ptolemy and Aristoboulos credit for a higher moral standard than that of Alexander himself. If Alexander, as Mr. Grote believes,† massacred the Branchidai as an act of piety, Ptolemy or Aristoboulos would be quite as likely to applaud as to condemn the deed. If, out of zeal for Alexander's good name, they left out the kiss publicly given by him to Bagôas‡ in the theatre, we must infer that their morals were sterner than those of the assembled Macedonians, Greeks, and Per-

* Perhaps every one of Bishop Thirlwall's endless sarcasms against Archdeacon Williams's 'Life of Alexander,' is in itself strictly deserved. Yet the book, as a whole, is not so bad as might be thought from the specimens thus embalmed. Among a good many blunders and a great deal of partiality, it shows some thought and research, and it is written in a specially agreeable manner.

† Vol. xii. p. 275.

‡ See Plut. Alex. 67 (compare, on the other hand, c. 22); Athen. xiii. 80 (p. 603); compare on the other hand, x. 45 (p. 435). Compare also the counter story about Agêsilaos, Xen. Ages. v. 4.

sians, who called for and who applauded the act. It is far more likely that they passed by the one tale as untrue, the other perhaps as untrue, anyhow as trivial. Still it must be known that the silence of Arrian is not of itself conclusive against a statement. Arrian was himself a military man of some reputation, fond both of the theory and the practice of his art. His history therefore is primarily a military one, and he sometimes passes lightly over matters which do not bear on military affairs. But both the assertions and the silence of Arrian afford strong *a priori* grounds of historical presumption, against which the statements of the other writers must be weighed at whatever they are worth.

It is no wonder then that, from such a mass of conflicting evidence, different minds should draw different conclusions, and that Alexander should appear one kind of being to Mitford, Droysen, and Archdeacon Williams, and quite another to Ste Croix, Niebuhr, and Mr. Grote. Among these, Droysen and Niebuhr form the two extremes on either side, for blind and often unfair idolatry, and for still more blind and unfair depreciation. High above them all, the serene intellect of Bishop Thirlwall holds the judicial balance. He can sympathize with the fall of Athenian freedom without denying the common rights of mankind to its destroyers. He can reverence Lykourgos and Dêmosthenês, and can yet see a hero in Alexander, and not an unmixed monster even in Philip. He can understand how a man exposed to the most fearful of temptations may sink into many faults and occasional crimes, and yet keep a heart sound at its core. He will not deny to such an one, though he may have been the author of much incidental evil, his claim to be ranked among the benefactors of mankind. The oftener we read Bishop Thirlwall's narrative of this period, the more disposed are we to see in it the nearest approach to the perfection of critical history. The acute appreciation, the calm balancing of evidence, the deep knowledge of human nature, the clear and vigorous narrative, the eloquence and feeling with which he sums up the character of the conqueror, would be alone

enough to place their author in the very first rank of historical writers. In his treatment of the internal affairs of Athens in earlier times Mr. Grote far outshines Bishop Thirlwall; but nowhere does he equal, or even approach, the Bishop's admirable narrative of the period from the accession of Philip to the death of Dêmêtrios Poliorkêtês. It is therefore, on the whole, the Alexander of Thirlwall, rather than the Alexander either of Grote or of Droysen, who deserves to live in the memory of mankind and to challenge the admiration of the world.

The first leading fact in Alexander's history is that a King of the Macedonians overthrew the Persian empire, in the character of Captain-general of Hellas and in the name of Hellenic vengeance for wrongs wrought on Hellas by the Barbarians of a past generation. The second fact is that, when he had carried out this work, he began to identify himself with the empire which he had overthrown, that he took on himself the character of King of Asia, that he began a series of conquests in which neither Greece nor Macedonia had either real or sentimental interest, and, that he was cut off while engaged in organizing a world-wide dominion of which both Greece and Macedonia would have been, in geographical extent, insignificant corners. In looking at such a career, its hero must be judged by the standard of his own times, and not by any standard, whether moral or political, which is either purely Christian or purely modern. Alexander cannot be fairly judged by a higher standard, except on a view which is of itself the greatest homage to him—namely, that he was a man of such greatness as to belong to all time, one to whom men might reasonably look to forestall the progress of future ages. But in all fairness, Alexander must be looked on simply as a heathen Greek warrior of the fourth century before Christ. It is enough if his career, allowing for his special circumstances and temptations, be found to be not less honourable than that of Agêsilaos or Pelopidas. Mr. Grote, who looks at Alexander not as a Greek but as a Barbarian,

should in fairness judge him by a standard still less strict; he should not condemn him if he reaches the measure of the better class of Persian rulers, of the first Darius, of the elder or the younger Cyrus.

Nothing would be easier than to set forth in glowing language the wretchedness which must have been the immediate result of Alexander's conquests, and to lament that the lives of countless thousands should have been sacrificed to the insatiable ambition of a single man. But these are objections, not to Alexander, but to war in the abstract. The real questions are, Were the wars of Alexander unjust according to the principles of his own age? Were they carried on with any circumstances of cruelty or perfidy contrary to the laws of war which were then acknowledged?

The notions which were held, not only by Greek soldiers, but by Greek philosophers also, as to the relations between Greek and Barbarian, were of a kind which it is not easy for modern Europe to enter into. They may be compared with the line which Islam draws between the true believer and the infidel. Between those two classes there is to be an endless holy war modified only by the obligations which may spring out of special treaties, or rather truces. Unless he is under the safeguard of such special engagements, the infidel has nothing to look for but death or submission. Not very unlike this was the light in which, for some ages at least, the Christians* of Europe looked on the heathens of Asia, Africa, and America. The old Greek deemed the Barbarian, unless he was protected by some special compact, to be his natural foe and his natural slave. War between the two was looked upon as the regular order of things. And war, it should be remembered, even when waged by Greek against Greek, carried with it utter havoc and devastation. Fruit-trees were cut down, corn-fields were trampled, houses were burned, every kind of wanton ravage was wrought, not only from the incidental necessities of a battle, but as the ordinary consequence of a march through an enemy's country. Nothing

* See Arnold, Thucydides, vol. i. p. 28.

but a special capitulation could even secure the life and freedom of the prisoner. To slaughter the men and sell the women and children of a captured town was looked on indeed as harshness, but as harshness which occasion might justify, and which was no breach of the received laws of war. If we look at it by these principles, we shall hardly pronounce Alexander's attack on the Persian Empire to have been unjust in itself; we shall certainly not pronounce it to have been carried out with wanton harshness in detail.

Long before Alexander was born, long before Macedonia rose to greatness, a Pan-Hellenic expedition against Persia had been the day-dream alike of Greek statesmen and of Greek rhetoricians. It was the cherished vision of the long life of Isokratês. It had been planned by the Thessalian Tagos Jasôn. It had been actually begun by the Spartan King Agêsilaos. Dêmosthenês himself would hardly have said anything against it on the score of abstract justice. In his view it was untimely, it was impolitic, it was dangerous to Athenian and even to Hellenic interests. Persia was no longer to be feared, while Macedonia was of all powers the one that was most to be feared. These arguments settled the matter as against a Pan-Hellenic attack on Persia under Macedonian headship. But there is no reason to think that such a warfare, under more favourable circumstances and with a less dangerous leader, would have sinned against any abstract moral instinct in any Athenian or Lacedæmonian statesman.

The question now arises, How far had Alexander any right to put himself forward as the champion of united Hellas against the Barbarian? According to Mr. Grote, Alexander himself was no Greek, but a mere Barbarian or half-Barbarian, who had at most put on some superficial varnish of Hellenic culture. He was a mere 'non-Hellenic conqueror,' almost as external as Darius or Xerxes. Instead of the champion, he was the destroyer, the tyrant, of independent Hellas. Grecian interests lay on the side of Persia, not on that of Macedonia. The victory of Alexander at Gaugamêla brought about sub-

stantially the same results as would have followed a victory of Xerxes at Salamis. In fact, if a cry of Hellenic liberty or Hellenic vengeance was to be raised, it was the despot of Pella, not the despot of Susa, against whom the national crusade ought to have been preached.

In all this there is much of truth. Indeed, the purely political portion of the theory cannot be disputed. It had been before put forth, with no difference that we can see, by Bishop Thirlwall himself. Archdeacon Williams indeed holds, with the Corinthian Dêmaratos, that the sight of Alexander on the throne of Darius 'must have been a source of the greatest pride and exultation to every Greek who possessed a single spark of national feeling.'* But even he can see that the Macedonians at Issos 'conquered not the Persians alone, but the united efforts of Southern Greece and Persia.'† Undoubtedly Grecian interests, in the narrower sense, lay on the Persian, and not on the Macedonian side. A Persian victory at Gaugamêla would have been almost as great a gain for the political freedom of Athens as was the Persian defeat at Marathôn. The old Greek system of independent city-commonwealths was in no wise threatened by Persia; it was more than threatened by Macedonia. We see all this now; Athenian and Spartan statesmen saw it at the time. It was natural that every Athenian patriot should see a friend in his old enemy the Great King, a foe and an oppressor in the self-styled champion of Greece. Nor is it unnatural that the modern champion of Athenian freedom should see the whole matter from an Athenian point of view, and should set down the claims of Alexander to Hellenic championship as mere mockery and pretence. But all this by no means proves that there was not another side to the question, one which might be fairly taken, and which actually was taken, both by Alexander himself and by a large part of the Greek nation.

The exact ethnical relation between the Greek and the Macedonian people is a difficult question, and one on which

* Life of Alexander, p. 176. † Ibid, p. 111.

we need not here enter.* Very different statements are found in different authorities. Alexander assumes Macedonia to be beyond doubt part of Greece.† Dêmosthenês reckons Philip not only as no Greek, but as among the vilest of Barbarians.‡ Both these statements are clearly interested exaggerations in opposite directions. The Macedonian was certainly not strictly a Greek, yet neither was he strictly a Barbarian;§ he had at least a power of adopting Greek culture which was not shared by the Persian or the Egyptian. Throughout the campaigns of Alexander, we always feel that Greeks and Macedonians, whatever might be the amount of difference among themselves, form one class as opposed to the mere Asiatic Barbarian. It is not only that they were fighting under the same banners,—so were Greek and Barbarian on the opposite side,—it is that Greek and Macedonian alike display those peculiar military qualities which have always distinguished the European from the Asiatic, and of which the Greek had hitherto been the great example. The Macedonian, in short, if not a born Greek, became a naturalized Greek. He was the first-fruits of that artificial Greek nation which was to play so important a part in later times, and whose nationality is still vigorous and progressive in our own day. Indeed, from the highest Hellenic type at Athens the descent is very gradual down to the non-Hellenic or semi-Hellenic Epeirots and Macedonians. The latter surely did not stand so far below the Greek of Ætolia or Thessaly as the Greek of Ætolia or Thessaly stood below the Greek of Athens. The few traces which we have of the old Macedonian language show it to have been a speech not strictly Greek, but still closely allied to Greek. It may even have

* [See above, p. 90.]

† Μακεδονίαν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην Ἑλλάδα. (Arrian, ii. 14.)

‡ οὐ μόνον οὐχ Ἕλληνος ὄντος οὐδὲ προσήκοντος οὐδὲν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ βαρβάρου ἐντεῦθεν ὅθεν καλὸν εἰπεῖν, ἀλλ' ὀλέθρου Μακεδόνος, κ.τ.λ. Dem. Phil. iii. 40 (p. 119).

§ 'Greeks, Macedonians, Barbarians' are spoken of as three distinct classes, not only by Arrian (ii. 7, iv. 11) but by Isokratês, Philip, 178. So Plutarch, Alex. 47 (cf. 51).

been no further removed from Attic purity than was the speech of the wild Ætolians.* At all events, Greek of respectable purity soon became the one tongue of Macedonian government, literature, and business. A nation which could so soon take up with the language, manners, and religion of Greece cannot be looked upon as a horde of outside Barbarians like the Persian invaders. Nor did the adoption of Greek manners by the Macedonians merely answer to their partial adoption in after days by the Roman conquerors of Greece. The Roman never lost his separate national being and his national dominion. He never looked on himself as a Greek or laid aside the language of Latium. But the Macedonian sunk his distinct nationality in that of his subjects. He was content with the position of the dominant Greek among other Greeks.

But whatever the Macedonian people were, the Macedonian Kings were undoubtedly Hellenic. Isokratês loves to point to the willing subjection of Macedonia to its Greek rulers as one of the noblest tributes to the inborn superiority of the Greek.† In much earlier times the judges of Olympia had acknowledged another Alexander as a Greek, an Argive, a Herakleid. In the veins of the son of Philip and Olympias the blood of Hêraklês was mingled with the blood of Achilleus. Not only Philip, but earlier Macedonian Kings, had striven, and not without fruit, to bring their subjects within the pale of the civilization of their own race. Philip first showed himself to the south of Olympos, not as a Barbarian conqueror, but as the champion of Apollôn, chosen by the Amphiktyonic Synod to lead the armies of the God against the sacrilegious Phokian. His services were rewarded by the admission of himself and his successors as members of the great religious Council of Greece. From that moment Macedonia is clearly entitled to rank as a Greek state.

The object of Philip clearly was, not to macedonize Hellas,

* Ὅπερ [Εὐρυτᾶνες] μέγιστον μέρος ἐστὶ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν, ἀγνωστότατοι δὲ γλῶσσαν καὶ ὠμοφάγοι εἰσὶν, ὡς λέγονται. (Thuc. iii. 94.)

† Isok. Philip. 125, 6.

but to hellenize Macedonia. Macedonia was acknowledged as a Greek state; the next step was to make it the dominant Greek state. The supremacy, the *ἡγεμονία*, of Greece, which had so often been struggled for among her leading cities, was now to be claimed by the King of the Macedonians, not as a foreign invader, but by virtue of his Hellenic position as chief of the most powerful of Greek states. By the confederacy of Corinth, Macedonia was clothed with the same supremacy which, after the battle of Aigos Potamos and again after the peace of Antalkidas, had been held by Sparta. The existence of such a supremacy in both cases sinned against Greek political instincts, and in both cases it led to much practical oppression. But we have no reason to think that the supremacy of Macedonia was at all more oppressive than the supremacy of Sparta. Dêmosthenês, or rather some contemporary orator under his name,* has drawn a dark enough picture of Macedonian rule; but hardly so dark a picture as Isokratês had before drawn of Spartan rule.† Philip and Alexander do not seem to have systematically interfered with the governments of the Greek cities.‡ Athens, under the supremacy of Sparta, was put under the tyranny of the Thirty. Under the supremacy of Macedonia, she kept her democracy, and listened to Dêmosthenês pleading for the Crown. In Asia, Lysandros everywhere set up oligarchies; § Alexander, in several places at least, restored democracies. ‖ We need not believe that he had any enthusiasm for popular rights, but he at least had not that abstract hatred of freedom

* See the oration *Περὶ τῶν πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον συνθηκῶν* throughout.

† Paneg. 144. et seq. Panath. 57. et seq. &c.

‡ In two cases, that of Messênê and of the Achaian Pellênê, Alexander is accused (Dem. *περὶ τῶν πρὸς Ἀ.* 5. 12., Pausanias, viii. 7. 27) of forestalling the policy of his successors and of setting up a Tyrant in a Grecian city. But these acts seem to stand quite alone. Elsewhere we find him (Arrian, v. 25) expressing admiration for the aristocratical constitutions which he found in some Indian states. He would doubtless favour whatever form of government best suited his policy in each particular case.

§ See Isok. Panath. 58.

‖ Arrian, ii. 17, 18; ii. 5.

which has been the leading feeling of so many Kings. The supremacy of Philip and Alexander was naturally hateful to great cities like Thebes, Athens, and Sparta, which strove to set up a similar supremacy of their own. But we can hardly doubt that many of the smaller states hailed them as deliverers, and gave their votes in the synod of Corinth with hearty good will.

The main difference between the Macedonian supremacy and the earlier supremacy of Athens, Thebes, or Sparta, lay in this—that those states were republics, while Macedonia was a monarchy. Mr. Grote seems to argue that Philip and Alexander could not be Greeks, because they were Kings.* In another place† he far more truly speaks of Alexander as being, in many respects, a revival of the Homeric Greek. But the Homeric Greek was surely a Greek and not a Barbarian; one main difference between Greece and Macedonia was that Macedonia had kept on the old heroic kingship which Greece had cast aside. Such was the case with Molossis also, the land of Alexander's mother, a state where, just as in Macedonia, Greeks of heroic descent reigned over a people who were at most only half Hellenic. Molossis, like Macedonia, became Greek; indeed it went a step farther than Macedonia, and became a democratic confederation.

We hold then that Alexander has the fullest right to all the honours of the Hellenic name, though his sympathies may well have lain more warmly with the heroic Greeks of the Homeric age than with the republican Greeks of his own day. Yet he did not appear among those republican Greeks as a barbarian conqueror. It was his ambition to attack the Barbarian in the character of the chosen champion of Hellas, and that rank was formally bestowed upon him, with the outward consent of all,‡ and doubtless with the real good will of many. As such, he crossed over to Asia, he overthrew

* Vol. xii. p. 3. † Ibid. p. 95.

‡ Arrian, i. 1. Sparta alone refused.

the Persian dominion, and solemnly destroyed the palace of the Persian Kings in revenge for the ravages wrought by Xerxes in Greece. The championship of Hellas was, at least during this stage of his life, always strongly put forward; and who has the right to say that it was dishonestly put forward? The inscription on his votive offering was, 'Alexander the son of Philip, and the Greeks, the Lacedæmonians excepted, from the Barbarians who inhabit Asia.'* The place chosen for the offering was not Dion or Pella, but the Akropolis of Athens. In his passage through Grecian Asia, he proclaimed himself as a Grecian deliverer, and, as we have seen, he restored to the Grecian cities their democratic freedom. If he dealt harshly with Greeks in the Persian service, it was because they had transgressed the common decree of the nation;† and he carefully distinguished between those who had enlisted before and those who had enlisted after his own acknowledgement as Pan-Hellenic Captain-general. ‡

There is no doubt that the mercenary Greeks who fought for the Great King against that Pan-Hellenic Captain-general were in truth fighting the battles of Hellas. So, if Persia had taken mercenary Greeks into her service against Agêsilaos, they would have fought the battles, perhaps of Hellas, at any rate of Thebes and of Athens. But the battles of Hellas were

* Arrian, i. 16.

† Ibid. i. 16. 29; iii. 23. Mr. Grote, somewhat strangely to our mind, likens Alexander's relation towards the Greek Confederacy to Buonaparte's relation towards the Confederation of the Rhine (vol. xii. p. 70). He quotes an instance of the distinction made by Buonaparte, in his Russian campaign, between native Russians and Germans in the Russian service. The former were honourable enemies doing their duty; the latter were his own rebellious subjects, whom he might deal with as traitors. This, Mr. Grote tells us, answers to Alexander's treatment of the Greeks in the Persian service. But, to make the analogy good for anything, Buonaparte should have proclaimed himself as a German, the chosen head of Germany, the Germanizer of France, the invader of Russia to avenge German wrongs. Alexander did not say that the Greek prisoners were his 'subjects,' as Buonaparte did with the Germans. He said that they were 'Greeks, fighting against Greece, contrary to the common agreement of all the Greeks' (*ἀδικεῖν γὰρ μεγάλα τοὺς στρατευομένους ἐνάντια τῇ Ἑλλάδι, παρὰ τοῖς βαρβάροις, παρὰ τὰ δόγματα τὰ Ἑλλήνων*).

‡ Arrian, iii. 24.

fought in the one case, they would have been fought in the other, in an indirect and underhand way. One can hardly believe that the Greeks who fought for Persia at Issos and Gaugamêla shared the same feelings of Hellenic patriotism as the Greeks who fought openly for Greece at Chairôneia and at Krannôn. The show and sentiment of Hellenic nationality must have been throughout on the side of Alexander. An Athenian patriot lamenting the degradation of his own once ruling city, indeed a keen-sighted politician in any Grecian city, might wish well to Darius and ill to Alexander.* But the sight of a hero-King, sprung from the most venerated heroes of Grecian legend, devoting himself to avenge the old wrongs of Greece upon the Barbarian, must have had a charm about him which it was hard indeed to withstand. Alexander at least fully believed in his own mission ; and such of his Macedonians as took up any Hellenic position at all, would, with the usual zeal of new converts, feel such influences even more strongly than the Greeks themselves.

Nor does Alexander's conduct within Greece itself, at all events during the earlier years of his reign, at all belie these Hellenic claims. The destruction of Thebes was indeed an awful blow, but it was a blow in no wise more awful than Hellenic cities had often suffered at each other's hands. As far as human suffering went, the vengeance of Alexander upon Thebes was less extreme than the vengeance of Athens upon Skiônê and Mêlos. The fate of Thebes moreover was referred by Alexander to his own Greek allies, to Plataians and Orchomenians, whose own cities had been overthrown by Thebes in her day of might, and who now hastened with delight to wreak their vengeance upon their oppressor.

* [In my Essay, as it was published in the Edinburgh Review, the following words followed this sentence: 'As many of the French *emigrés* and some of the friends of liberty in 1814 supported the cause of the Allies against the cause of Napoleon.' What these words mean, what they have to do with the matter, is beyond my power even of guessing. The interpolator, whoever he was, must explain.]

What seemed so specially awe-striking in the fate of Thebes was not the mere amount of misery that was wrought, but, as Mr. Grote says,* the breach of Hellenic sentiment in the destruction of so great a city, a city of such historical and legendary fame, and the danger of offending local Gods and heroes by putting an end to their accustomed local worship. Had Alexander merely driven out or enslaved the existing Thebans, and had handed over the walls and temples to a new Theban community formed out of his own Greek allies, but little would have been said of his cruelty. As it was, the destruction of Thebes was held to follow him through life. The native city of Dionysos was overthrown, and the destroyer had to look for the vengeance of the patron-God. He paid the penalty when Kleitos fell by his hand, and when his army refused to march beyond the Hyphasis.† But, even in earlier days, he repented of the deed, and he tried to make amends by showing special kindness to such Thebans as the chances of war threw in his way.‡

Against harshness towards Thebes we may, in the case both of Philip and Alexander, set generosity towards Athens. Both of them, it is plain, had a strong feeling of reverence for the intellectual mistress of Hellas. Such a feeling was likely to be far stronger in Macedonians who had adopted Grecian culture than it would be in contemporary Spartans or Thebans, to whom Athens was merely an ordinary enemy or ally. Athens was a political adversary both to Philip and to Alexander; both of them humbled her so far as their policy called for; but neither of them ever thought in her case of those acts of coercion and vengeance which they deemed needful in the case of Thebes. When Thebes received a garrison from Philip, Athens was only called on to give up her foreign possessions. When Thebes was levelled with the ground by Alexander, Athens was only called on to give up her obnoxious orators, and even that demand was not finally

* xii. 57. † Plut. Alex. 13.

‡ Arrian, ii. 15.

pressed.* As we have seen, Alexander's first barbarian spoils were dedicated in Athenian temples; from the captured palace of the Great King he sent back to Athens the statues of her tyrannicides. Even the anecdote told by Plutarch,† which sets forth Athenian praise as the chief object of his toils, exaggerated as it doubtless is, shows at least that the Macedonian conqueror, though his conquests might carry with them the overthrow of the political greatness of Athens, was in no way, in spirit or feeling, the foe of Athens or of Greece.

Three great battles and several great sieges made Alexander master of the Persian empire. And it is worth remark that the immediate results of the three battles, Granikos, Issos, and Gaugamêla, coincide with lasting results in the history of the world. The victory of the Granikos made Alexander master of Asia Minor, of a region which in the course of a few centuries was thoroughly hellenized, and which remained Greek, Christian, and Orthodox, down to the Turkish invasions of the eleventh century. The territory which Alexander thus won, the lands from the Danube to Mount Tauros, answered very nearly to the extent of the Byzantine Empire for several centuries, and it might very possibly have been ruled by him, as it was in Byzantine times, from an European centre. The field of Issos gave him Syria and Egypt, lands

* Mr. Grote (vol. xii. p. 63) has a note on the details connected with Alexander's demand for the extradition of the orators, into which we need not enter. But we may mention thus much. Mr. Grote says:—

'I think it highly improbable that the Athenians would by public vote express their satisfaction that Alexander had punished the Thebans for their revolt. If the Macedonising party at Athens was strong enough to carry so ignominious a vote, they would also have been strong enough to carry the subsequent proposition of Phokion,—that the ten citizens demanded should be surrendered.'

But surely it is on thing to pass a vote which, however ignominous, did no actual harm to anybody, another to hand over illustrious citizens to exile, bonds, or death. Doubtless many votes would be given for the one motion, which would be given against the other.

† Alex. 60. *ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, ἆρά γε πιστεύσαιτ' ἂν ἡλίκους ὑπομένω κινδύνους ἕνεκα τῆς παρ' ὑμῖν εὐδοξίας*; This is put into his mouth at the crossing of the Hydaspes, just before the great battle with Pôros.

which the Macedonian and the Roman kept for nearly a thousand years, and which for ages contained, in Alexandria and Antioch, the two greatest of Grecian cities. But Syria and Egypt themselves never became Greek; when they became Christian, they failed to become Orthodox, and they fell away at the first touch of the victorious Saracen. Their government called for an Asiatic or Egyptian capital, but their ruler might himself still have remained European and Hellenic. His third triumph at Gaugamêla gave him the possession of the whole East; but it was but a momentary possession: he had now pressed onward into lands where neither Grecian culture, Roman dominion, nor Christian theology proved in the end able to strike any lasting root.

Mr. Grote remarks that Philip would most likely have taken the advice of Parmeniôn, so scornfully cast aside by Alexander, and would have accepted the offer of Darius to give up the provinces west of the Euphrates. Alexander himself might well have taken it could he have foreseen the future destiny which fixed the Euphrates as the lasting boundary of European dominion in Asia. But for the sentiment of Hellenic vengeance—we may add for Alexander's personal spirit of adventure—it was not enough to rob Persia of her foreign possessions; he must overthrow Persia herself. Persian Kings had taken tribute of Macedonia and had harried Greece; Greek and Macedonian must now march in triumph into the very home of the enemy. As Xerxes had sat in state by the ruins of Athens, so must the Captain-general of Hellas stand in the guise of the Avenger over the blackened ruins of Persepolis. But the conquest of Persia at once changed the whole position of the conqueror. The whole realm of the Achaimenids could neither be at once hellenized, nor yet turned into a dependency of Macedonia. The limited King of the Macedonians, the elective Captain-general of Greece, was driven to take to himself the position of the Great King, and to reign on the throne of Cyrus, as his lawful successor, and not as a foreign intruder.

Here was the rock upon which Alexander's whole scheme

of conquest split. He had gone too far; yet his earlier position was one which would hardly have allowed him to stop sooner. Till he crossed the Persian Gates, he had appeared rather as a deliverer than as an enemy to the native inhabitants of all the lands through which he passed. The Greek cities of Asia welcomed a conqueror of their own race, a King who did not shrink from giving back to them their democratic freedom. Even to the barbarian inhabitants of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, Alexander might well appear as a deliverer. A change of masters is commonly welcome to subject nations; and men might fairly deem that a Greek would make a better master than a Persian. Against Phœnicians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Alexander had no mission of vengeance; he might rather call on them to help him against the common foe. If they had served in the army of Xerxes, so had his own Herakleid forefathers.* If the Gods of Attica had been wronged and insulted, so had the Gods of Memphis and Babylon. In Western Asia therefore Alexander met with but little strictly native opposition, save only from those fierce tribes which had here and there still kept their independence against the Persian, and which had as little mind to give it up to the Macedonian. But at last he reached Persia itself; he entered the royal city, where the Great King reigned, not, as at Susa and Babylon, as a foreign conqueror, but as the chief of his own people, in the hearth and cradle of his empire. He saw the palace of the Barbarian arrayed with the spoils of Greece; he threw open his treasure-house rich with the tribute of many Grecian cities, and of his own once subject kingdom. The destruction of the Persepolitan palace might well seem to him an impressive act of symbolical vengeance, a costly sacrifice to the offended Gods of Greece and Macedonia, of Babylon and Syria and Egypt.

* Mr. Grote would seem (vol. xii. p. 56) to imply that this fact barred Alexander from all right to avenge the Persian invasion; at all events that it barred him from all right to reproach Thebes with her share in it. But the earlier Alexander, in following Xerxes, only bowed to the same constraint as all Northern Greece; and it is clear that his heart was on the side of Athens, while Thebes served the Barbarian with hearty good will.

But in this impressive scene at Persepolis Alexander showed himself for the last time in the character of Hellenic avenger. Not long afterwards, the fortunate crime of Bessos handed over to the invader all the gains, without any of the guilt, of the murder of Darius. From this moment Alexander appears as the Great King, the successor of Cyrus. On his change of position naturally followed many changes in other respects. He began to claim the same outward marks of homage as had been shown to his predecessors, a homage which, according to Greek and Macedonian notions, was degrading, if not impious. We readily allow that from this time the character of Alexander changed for the worse; that his head was in some degree turned by success; that his passions, always impetuous, now became violent;* that, in short, with the position of an Eastern despot, he began to share a despot's feelings, and now and then to be hurried into a despot's crimes.

His position was now a strange one. He had gone too far for his original objects. Lasting possession of his conquests beyond the Tigris could be kept only in the character of King of the Medes and Persians. Policy bade him to put on that character. We can also fully believe that he was himself really dazzled with the splendour of his superhuman success. His career had been such as to outdo the wildest dreams which he could have cherished either in his waking or his sleeping moments. The Great King, the type of earthly splendour and happiness, had fallen before him; he himself was now the Great King; he was lord of an empire wider than Grecian imagination had assigned to any mortal; he was master of wealth which in Grecian eyes might enable its possessor to enter into the lists with Zeus himself.† But no feature of the Hellenic character is more remarkable, as Mr. Grote himself has so often shown, than inability to bear unlooked-for good luck. A far lower

* Arrian, vii. 8. *ἦν γὰρ δὴ ὀξύτερος ἐν τῷ τότε, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς βαρβαρικῆς θεραπείας οὐκέτι ὡς πάλαι ἐπιεικὴς ἐς τοὺς Μακεδόνας.*

† Herod. v. 49. *ἑλόντες δὲ ταύτην τὴν πόλιν,* [*Σοῦσα*] *θαρσεόντες ἤδη τῷ Διὶ πλούτου πέρι ἐρίζετε.*

height had turned the heads of Miltiadês, Pausanias, and Alkibiadês. Was it then wonderful that, on a height such as none of them had dreamed of, the head of Alexander should be turned also? We may believe that the conduct which policy dictated was also personally agreeable; that he took a delight, unreasonable indeed to a philosopher, but natural to a man, in the splendours of his new position; that he may even have been beguiled into some of its besetting vices, into something of the luxury and recklessness of an eastern King. The mind of Alexander was one which lay specially open to all heroic and legendary associations; he was at once the offspring and the imitator of Gods and heroes. His own deeds had outdone those which were told of any of his divine forefathers or their comrades; Achilleus, Hêraklês, Thêseus, Dionysos, had done and suffered less than Alexander. Was it then wonderful that he should seriously believe that one who had outdone their acts must come of a stock equal to their own? Was it wonderful if, not merely in pride or policy, but in genuine faith,* he disclaimed a human parent in Philip, and looked for the real father of the conqueror and lord of earth in the conqueror and lord of the heavenly world?

We believe then that policy, passion, and genuine superstition were all joined together in the demand which Alexander made for divine, or at least for unusual, honours. He had taken the place of the Great King, and he demanded the homage which was held to be due to him who held that place. Such homage his barbarian subjects were perfectly ready to pay; they would most likely have had but little respect for a king who forgot to call for it. But the homage which to a Persian seemed only the natural expression of respect for the royal dignity, seemed to Greeks and Macedonians an invasion of the honour due only to the immortal Gods. Yet Alexander could hardly, with any prudence, draw a distinction between the two classes of his subjects. He certainly could not put up with a state of things in which every Persian who came to

* Mr. Grote admits this, vol. xii. p. 202.

do his ordinary service to his King was left open to the coarse jeers of Macedonian soldiers and to the more eloquent rebukes of Grecian sophists.* The claim of divine birth was not needed to impose upon Orientals; it was needed to impose upon Europeans. The Orientals were ready enough to pay all that Alexander asked for to a mere earthly sovereign. For a man to be the child of a God was an idea utterly repugnant to the Persian religion, while nothing was more familiar to Grecian notions. Least of all would Alexander, in order to impose upon his Persian subjects, have chosen as his parent a God of the conquered and despised Egyptians. This was no difficulty to the Greeks and Macedonians, who looked on the Egyptian Ammôn as the same God with their own Zeus. The homage which they refused to an earthly King they might willingly pay to the son of Zeus, the peer of Hêraklês and Dionysos. Nor was Alexander the first who had received the like or greater honours even during his lifetime. Lysandros, the Spartan citizen, had supplanted Hêrê in the worship of the Samians;† and Philip, the Macedonian King, had, on one memorable day, marched as a thirteenth among the twelve great Gods of Olympos. ‡ At what time the idea of a divine birth first came into the mind of Alexander or of his courtiers is far from clear. The inferior writers give us full details of the reception which his divine father gave him at his Libyan oracle; but the sober Arrian keeps a discreet silence.

Probably no other way could be found to reconcile his European subjects to a homage which was absolutely necessary to maintain his Asiatic dominion. But nothing shows more clearly the incongruous nature of Alexander's position as at once despotic King of Asia, constitutional § King of the

* See Arrian, iv. 12. Compare Plut. Alex. 74.

† Plut. Lys. 18. ‡ Diod. xvi. 92. 95.

§ We think we may fairly use this word. Of course, as Mr. Grote often tells us, the will of the King, and not the declared will of the people, was the great moving cause in Macedonian affairs. But the Macedonians were not slaves. Alexander himself (Arrian, ii. 7) contrasts the Macedonians as

Macedonians, and elective President of the Hellenic Confederacy. It is not wonderful if it led him in his later days to deal with his European subjects and confederates in a way widely different from any in which they had been dealt with in the early part of his reign. He not only sent round to all the cities of Greece to demand divine honours, which were perhaps not worth refusing,* but he ordered each city to bring back its political exiles. This last was an interference with the internal government of the cities which certainly was not warranted by Alexander's position as head of the Greek Confederacy. And, in other respects also, from this unhappy time all the worst failings of Alexander become more strongly developed. Had he not been from the first impetuous and self-confident, he could never have begun his career of victory. Impetuosity and self-exaltation now grew upon him, till he could bear neither restraint nor opposition. In one sad instance we even find these dangerous tendencies going together with something like the suspicious temper of an Eastern despot. Kleitos might perhaps have fallen by his hand in a moment of wrath at any stage of his life;† but we cannot believe that the fate of Philôtas and Parmeniôn could have happened at any moment before his entry into Persepolis. It is not safe to rely on the details of that unhappy story as given by Curtius and Plutarch; and we hardly know enough to pronounce with confidence upon the guilt or innocence of the victims. We need not believe that Alexander invited Philôtas to his table after he had made up his mind to destroy him, nor that he listened to and mocked the cries of

ἐλεύθεροι with the Persians as δοῦλοι; Curtius (iv. 7. 31) speaks of them as, 'Macedones assueti quidem regio imperio, sed majore libertatis umbrâ quam cæteræ gentes.' Certainly a people who kept in their own hands the power of life and death, and before whom their sovereign pleaded as an accuser—sometimes as an unsuccessful accuser—cannot be confounded with the subjects of an Eastern despotism.

* See Thirlwall, vol. vii. p. 163.

† The scene between Alexander and his father recorded by Plutarch (Alex. p. 9) certainly shows the germ of those failings which afterwards led to the murder of Kleitos.

his former friend when in the agonies of the torture. But we can plainly see that Alexander brought a charge and sought a condemnation on grounds which, to say the least, were not enough for a fair verdict of guilty. For once the narrative of Arrian gives us the impression that there was something which he or his authorities wished to slur over; and one would like to know the grounds which led the judicious Strabo to his seeming conviction of the guilt of the accused.* We are told that the Macedonian law of treason sentenced the kinsfolk of the condemned traitor to the same punishment as himself. We are also told by Diodôros† that Parmeniôn was formally condemned by the military Assembly, the constitutional tribunal when the life of a Macedonian was at stake. We may add that the acquital of some of the persons whom Alexander accused shows that that Assembly did exercise a will of its own, and did not always meet merely to register the royal decrees. It is therefore quite possible that the death of Parmeniôn, as well as that of Philôtas, may have been strictly according to the letter of the law. But we may be far more sure that Alexander would never have put such a law in force against his old friend and teacher in the days when he handed Parmeniôn's own accusing letter to his physician, and drank off the draught in which death was said to lurk.

We have already quoted the remark of Mr. Grote that the character of Alexander recalled, to a great extent, that of the heroes of legendary Greece. By virtue of the same features, it forestalled, to a great extent, that of the heroes of mediæval chivalry. Bishop Thirlwall‡ truly says that his disposition was 'rather generous than either merciful or scrupulously just,' but that 'cruelty, in the most odious sense of the word, wanton injustice, was always foreign to his nature.' Recklessness of human suffering is a necessary characteristic of every conqueror; but we have no reason to attribute it to

* xv. 2 (vol. iii. p. 312). *Φιλώταν ἀνείλε τὸν Παρμενίωνος υἱὸν, φωράσας ἐπιβουλήν.*

† xvii. 80.

‡ Vol. vii. p. 71.

Alexander in any greater degree than to all other aggressive warriors. But in Alexander, a general of the highest order and at the same time a man full of the highest spirit of personal adventure, we find, it may be, a greater delight in the practice of war for its own sake than in the warriors of the Grecian commonwealths. In Alexander too, a royal warrior, we find a feature of the chivalrous character which could not show itself in his republican predecessors. This is his extreme courtesy and deference to persons of his own rank; his almost overdone generosity to the family of Darius, and to Darius himself when he was no more. This is still more impressively set before us in his famous dialogue with the captive Pôros, a foe indeed after his own heart. The death and misery of innocent thousands are easily forgotten in the excess of chivalrous respect which is thus exchanged between the royal combatants who use them as their playthings. All these faults grew upon Alexander during the latter stages of his career. It is impossible to look with the same complacency upon his Indian campaigns as upon his warfare in Bithynia and Syria. The mission of Hellenic vengeance was then over. Personal ambition and love of adventure had been strongly mingled with it from the first; they now became the ruling passions. Yet Alexander's position, even in his later expeditions, is one easy to understand, if not altogether to justify. He was the Great King, partly winning back provinces which had been torn away from his predecessors, partly making good their vague claims to the universal empire of Asia. But he was also the Hellenic warrior, asserting the natural right of the civilized man over the Barbarian. He was the demigod, the son of Zeus, commissioned, like Thêseus or Hêraklês, at once to conquer and to civilize the earth. He was the ardent searcher after knowledge, eager to enlarge the bounds of human science, and to search out distant lands which could be searched out only at the point of the sword. In his later campaigns we can see a larger measure of arrogance, of rashness, of recklessness of human suffering; but it is nowhere shown that he

ever sinned against the received laws of war of his own age;* and certainly, even in his most unprovoked aggressions, we may still see traces of a generosity of spirit, a nobleness of purpose, which at once distinguish him from the vulgar herd of conquerors and devastators.

The unfulfilled designs of Alexander must ever remain in darkness; no man can tell what might have been done by one of such mighty powers who was cut off at so early a stage of his career. That he looked forward to still further conquests seems beyond doubt. † The only question is, Did his conquests, alike those which were won and those which were still to be won, spring from mere ambition and love of adventure, or is he to be looked on as in any degree the intentional missionary of Hellenic culture? That such he was is set forth with much warmth and some extravagance in a special treatise of Plutarch; ‡ it is argued more soberly, but with true vigour and eloquence, in the seventh volume of Bishop Thirlwall. § Mr. Grote denies him all merit of the kind. But Mr. Grote too thoroughly identifies 'Hellenism' with republicanism to be altogether a fair judge. He will hardly allow that there could be such a thing as Hellenic culture under a monarchy. Yet surely there is a difference between Greek and Barbarian before and above any distinction as to forms of government. Alexander is said to have found both aristocracies and democracies in India, but surely such aristocracies and democracies might need hellenizing by his Macedonian monarchy. That Alex-

* Plutarch (Alex. 59) says of one occasion in the Indian war: *σπεισάμενος ἔν τινι πόλει πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀπίοντας ἐν ὁδῷ λαβὼν ἅπαντας ἀπέκτεινε· καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς πολεμικοῖς αὐτοῦ ἔργοις τἄλλα νομίμως καὶ βασιλικῶς πολεμήσαντος ὥσπερ κηλὶς πρόσεστιν.* The place intended must be Massaga. If so, the narrative in Arrian (iv. 27) does not bear out Plutarch's censure. The capitulation was clearly broken on the other side. We may accept Bishop Thirlwall's (vol. vii. p. 8) censure, that 'Alexander exhibited less generosity than might have been expected from him, even if mercy was out of the question;' but there was no breach of faith.

† Arrian, vii. 1; ib. 19.

‡ *Περὶ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τύχης ἢ ἀρετῆς.*

§ P. 121 et seq.

ander did carry Hellenic culture into a large portion of the world is an undoubted fact. That he intended to do so is but an inference; but surely it is a very natural one.

Mr. Grote however somewhat strangely depreciates the merit of Alexander in this respect, in order by comparison to extol his successors.* So far as Asia was hellenized at all, it was, he tells us, not Alexander, but the Ptolemies and Seleukids, who hellenized it. No doubt the details of the process were carried out by them; but they did nothing but follow the impulse which had been given to them by their great master. No doubt also, as Mr. Grote points out, their circumstances were in some respects more favourable than those of Alexander for carrying on the work. Alexander himself could not do so much in eleven years of marching and countermarching as they could do in two centuries of comparative peace. Again, Asia Minor, as the event proved, could receive a lasting Hellenic culture, and Syria and Egypt could at least receive lasting Hellenic colonies. But no lasting Hellenic culture could flourish on the banks of the Indus and the Jaxartes. Yet it surely speaks much for Alexander's zeal in the cause, when we find him labouring for it under such unfavourable circumstances. At every promising spot he founds a Greek city, an Alexandria, and plants in it a Greek or Macedonian colony, whose language and manners might be spread among their barbarian fellow-citizens. Nor was his labour, even in those far-off lands, altogether thrown away. A Greek kingdom of Bactria flourished for some ages; several of his cities, though no longer Greek, flourish to this day; one at least, Candahar, still keeps the name of its founder. Mr. Grote himself does not deny that 'real consequences beneficial to humanity arose from Alexander's enlarged and systematic exploration of the earth, combined with increased means of communication among its inhabitants.'† Bishop Thirlwall, as might be expected, is far more copious and eloquent on this point:—

* Vol. xii. p. 362.

† Vol. xii. p. 368.

'Let any one contemplate the contrast between the state of Asia under Alexander, and the time when Egypt was either in revolt against Persia, or visited by her irritated conquerors with the punishment of repeated insurrection, when almost every part of the great mountain chain which traverses the length of Asia, from the Mediterranean to the borders of India, was inhabited by fierce, independent, predatory tribes: when the Persian kings themselves were forced to pay tribute before they were allowed to pass from one of their capitals to another. Let any one endeavour to enter into the feelings, with which a Phœnician merchant must have viewed the change that took place in the face of the earth, when the Egyptian Alexandria had begun to receive and pour out an inexhaustible tide of wealth: when Babylon had become a great port: when a passage was open both by sea and land between the Euphrates and the Indus: when the forests on the shores of the Caspian had begun to resound with the axe and the hammer. It will then appear that this part of the benefit which flowed from Alexander's conquest cannot be easily exaggerated. '*And yet this was perhaps the smallest part of his glory.*' *

Still more strangely, to our minds, does Mr. Grote† specially depreciate the merit of the greatest of Alexander's foundations. On a spot whose advantages had, for we know not how many thousand years, been overlooked by the vaunted wisdom of Egypt, a glance and a word of the Macedonian called into being the greatest mart and hearth of the commerce and cultivation of the world. But Mr. Grote tells us that the greatness of Alexandria was not owing to Alexander, but to the Ptolemies. As a single city of Alexander's universal empire, it could never have become what it did become as the royal seat of the smaller monarchy. Perhaps not: yet two points are worth noticing: first, that, if we may believe Niebuhr, Alexander designed Alexandria as the capital of his universal empire; secondly, that the commerce of Alexandria became far greater when it had sunk into a provincial city of the Roman dominion than it had been under at least the later Ptolemies.‡ And surely, after all, it is no disparagement to an originally great conception, if circumstances give it in the end a still greater developement than its first designer could have hoped for.

Nor does Alexander's partial adoption of Asiatic manners really prove anything against his civilizing intentions. The

* Vol. vii. p. 120. † Vol. xii. p. 200.

‡ See Merivale's Rome, vol. iv. p. 125.

Barbarian could not be won to the higher calling which was set before him unless his teachers stooped in some degree to his own prejudices. Greek sophists and Macedonian soldiers saw in the Persians merely born slaves with whom it was degrading to hold intercommunion. Alexander thought better of his new subjects. If he himself wore the costume of a Persian King, he taught the chosen youth of Persia the tongue of Greece, the arms and discipline of Macedonia.* This surely does not justify the doctrine of Mr. Grote, that 'instead of hellenizing Asia, he was tending to asiatize Macedonia and Hellas.'† Mr. Grote is again deceived by his unwillingness to look at the case from any but a political point of view. Alexander seems to him to be 'tending to asiatize Macedonia and Hellas,' because he increased the royal power in Macedonia, and extended it over Hellas. And we cannot help remarking how often, throughout his whole argument, Mr. Grote, who looks on Alexander and his Macedonians as utterly non-Hellenic, is driven to speak of Greece and Macedonia as forming a single whole in opposition to the Barbarians of Asia.

On the general merits of Alexander in his purely military capacity there is the less need for us to enlarge, as no one has ever done more full justice to them than Mr. Grote himself. The carping spirit of Niebuhr seems half inclined, if it were possible, to depreciate him in this respect also. The campaigns of Alexander are the earliest in which we can study war on a grand scale, carried out with all the appliances of art which was then known. Above all, he was conspicuous for his skill in the harmonious employment of troops of different kinds. Horsemen, phalangists, hypaspists, archers, horse-archers, all found their appropriate places in his armies. But our object is less to extol Alexander as a soldier than to vindicate him as a conqueror, to claim for him a higher moral and intellectual rank than can ever belong to the mere soldier, however illustrious. We have always delighted to look on Alexander as one who, among all the temptations

* See Thirlwall, vol. vii. p. 89. † Vol. xii. p. 359.

of the King and the warrior, still kept his love for elegant literature and scientific discovery. We were therefore surprised indeed at finding the last paragraph of Mr. Grote's ninety-fourth chapter thus analysed in the margin: 'Interest of Alexander in literature and science *not great*.' Yet in the text he allows that Alexander probably gave Aristotle help in his zoological researches, and he adds that 'the intellectual turn of Alexander was towards literature, poetry, and history.' He goes on to quote the instances given by Plutarch of his sending for historical and poetical works on his distant campaigns. To us it seems as much as can well be asked of a general on a distant march if he keeps up his personal taste for literature, poetry, and history, and encourages others in the pursuit of physical science.

We have thus far striven to defend the general character of Alexander against the view of him taken by Niebuhr, and, in a milder form, by Mr. Grote. We have implied that there are many particular cases in which, out of various conflicting reports, Mr. Grote adopts those which are most unfavourable to Alexander, and that on what seems to us to be inconclusive grounds. It is quite beyond our power to examine all of them in detail. We will therefore choose three of the most remarkable, namely, the conduct of Alexander at Tyre, at Gaza, and at Persepolis.

Of the first two of these enterprises each was the crowning of one of Alexander's earlier victories, the third was the formal gathering in of his final success. At Granikos, at Issos, and at Gaugamêla he overthrew the hosts of the Great King in open fight; at Tyre and at Gaza he overcame the most stubborn resistance of his feudatories and lieutenants; at Persepolis he entered into undisputed possession of his home and treasure. We must confess that we cannot enter into Mr. Grote's conception of the siege of Tyre.* He seems to look on it, laying aside moral considerations, as a mere foolhardy enterprise,

* Vol. xii. p. 182.

a simple waste of time which, from Alexander's own point of view, might have been better employed. Sympathy may be enlisted on the side of the Tyrians on many grounds. In the narrative of any siege our feelings almost unavoidably side with the beleaguered party. Whatever may be the right or wrong of the original quarrel, the besiegers are, then and there, the aggressors and the besieged are the defenders, and the besieged too are commonly the weaker party. The Tyrians again, from their former history, their commercial greatness, their comparative political freedom, have a claim on our sympathy far beyond the ordinary subjects of Persia. They were fully justified in braving every extremity on behalf of their allegiance to the Persian King. They were more than justified in braving every extremity in behalf of their independence of Persian and Macedonian alike. Nor should we be very hard upon them, if they first of all submitted to the invader, and then repented, drew back, withstood him to the death. But we must look at the matter from Alexander's point of view also. The question of abstract justice must of course apply to the war as a whole, not to each particular stage of its operations. If Alexander was to conquer Persia, he must conquer Tyre. Tyre offered her submission without waiting to be attacked; she acknowledged Alexander as her sovereign, and promised obedience to all his commands.* His first command was an announcement, conveyed in highly complimentary language, of his wish to enter the city, and to offer sacrifice in the great temple of Hêraklês. The request was doubtless half religious, half political. Alexander would be sincerely anxious to visit and to honour so renowned a shrine of his own supposed forefather. But he would be also glad to avail himself of so honourable a pretext for trying the fidelity of his new subjects. We really cannot see that this was, as Mr. Grote calls it, 'an extreme demand;' and, in any case, the Tyrians had promised to comply with all his demands, extreme or otherwise. When

* Arrian, ii. 15.

the demand was refused, it was utterly impossible to leave the refusal unpunished. So to have done would at once have broken the charm of success, and would have made the conquest of Western Asia imperfect. Had Tyre, with her powerful fleet, been left to defy Alexander unchastised, anti-Macedonian movements might have been always set on foot in Greece and Asia Minor. Nor could he leave Tyre, like the Halikarnassian citadel, to be blockaded by a mere division of his army. The work called, as the event proved, for his own presence and his whole force. This famous siege had undoubtedly the unhappy result of 'degrading and crushing one of the most ancient, spirited, wealthy, and intelligent communities of the ancient world;' but that community most undoubtedly brought its destruction upon itself, and we certainly cannot admit that its conquest was 'politically unprofitable' to the conqueror.

Now how did Alexander treat his conquest? Tyre, after a noble resistance, was taken by storm. The Macedonians, according to Arrian,* were kindled to extreme wrath because the Tyrians had habitually killed their prisoners before the eyes of their comrades, and had thrown their bodies into the sea. The mere slaughter of the prisoners was no breach of the Greek laws of war, though it would doubtless be felt as a special call to vengeance. But the mockery and the denial of burial were direct sins against all Greek religious notions. We therefore cannot be surprised that the successful assault of the city was followed by a merciless slaughter. Such would most likely have been the case with the most civilized armies of modern times. But did Alexander add to these horrors in cold blood? Arrian tells us that he spared all who took refuge in the temple of Hêraklês—who happened to be the King and the principal magistrates—and that he sold the rest as slaves, the common doom of prisoners in ancient warfare. According to Diodôros and Curtius, a certain number of the captives were hanged or crucified by

* ii. 24.

Alexander's order.* Mr. Grote accepts this tale. We see no ground to believe it. It is, to our mind, an instance of the mere love of horrors, which, as in other cases, shows itself in the invention of additional crimes on both sides. Curtius, who speaks of Alexander as crucifying Tyrian prisoners, also speaks of the Tyrians as murdering Macedonian heralds.† Arrian records neither atrocity; and we believe neither. Mr. Grote accepts the charge against Alexander and rejects the charge against his enemies.

The like, as seems to us, is the state of the case with regard to the atrocity laid to the charge of Alexander after his second great siege, that of Gaza. Mr. Grote here brings up again a tale which, as far as we are aware, has found acceptance with no other modern writer, and which Bishop Thirlwall passes by with the scorn of silence. Mr. Grote would have us believe that Alexander, after the capture of Gaza, caused its brave defender, the eunuch Batis, to be dragged to death at his chariot-wheels, in imitation of the treatment of Hektôr's dead body by Achilleus. This tale comes from Curtius; he most likely got it from Hêgêsias, who is quoted by Dionysios of Halikarnassos in one of his critical treatises.‡ Arrian, Plutarch, and Diodoros are alike ignorant of the story. The passage from Hêgêsias is quoted by Dionysios, without any historical object, as an instance of bad rhythm and bad taste. Mr. Grote truly says that 'the bad taste of Hegesias as a writer does not diminish his credibility as a witness.' But his credibility as a witness is not a little diminished by the general

* Diod. xvii. 46. *ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τέκνα μὲν καὶ γυναῖκας ἐξηνδραποδίσατο, τοὺς δὲ νέους ἅπαντας ὄντας οὐκ ἐλάττους τῶν δισχιλίων, ἐκρέμασε.*

Curtius iv. 4. 'Triste deinde spectaculum victoribus ira præbuit Regis. Duo millia, in quibus occidendi defecerat rabies, crucibus affixi per ingens littoris spatium pependerunt.'

Mr. Grote, here and elsewhere, translates *ἐκρέμασε*, *hanged*, Bishop Thirlwall, *crucified*. It *need* not imply the latter, and, between Diodôros and Curtius, a tale of hanging might easily grow into a tale of crucifixion. Similarly Plutarch has, in one place (Alex. 72) *ἀνεσταύρωσε*, where Arrian (vii. 14) has *ἐκρέμασε*.

† iv. 2.

‡ Vol. v. p. 125, ed. Reiske.

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witness of antiquity against him on more important points.* The tale seems to us utterly incredible. Mr. Grote allows that it 'stands out in respect of barbarity from all that we read respecting the treatment of conquered towns in antiquity.' Curtius acknowledges that it is repugnant to the usual character of Alexander.† We might add that Alexander, if he wished to copy Achilleus, could hardly have forgotten that Hektôr was dead, while Batis was living, and moreover he would hardly have copied Achilleus in an action which Homer expressly condemns.‡ But Mr. Grote should surely not have left out the fact that those who attribute this cruelty to Alexander speak of it as an act of revenge for a treacherous attempt which had been made upon Alexander on the part of Batis.§ Both Hêgêsias and Curtius tell us that an Arab of the garrison, in the guise of a suppliant or deserter, obtained admission to Alexander, that he attempted to kill him, and was himself killed by the King. The tale reminds one of the stories, true or false, of the fate of the Seljuk Sultan Togrel Beg and of the Ottoman Amurath the First.‖ Mr. Grote leaves out all mention of it, the only instance in which we have found him fail to put forth the whole evidence against his own view. To us the whole story, in both its parts, seems to be merely another instance of the way in which the love of marvels and horrors triumphed over simple truth. Imaginary crimes are heaped, certainly with praiseworthy impartiality, alike upon Alexander and upon his enemies.

And now as to Persepolis. We have already shown that we agree with Mr. Grote in believing that the destruction of the Persepolitan palace was Alexander's deliberate act. We have no doubt that the tale of Thais at the banquet is

* See Smith's Dict. of Biog., art. Hegesias.

† 'Alias virtutis etiam in hoste mirator.'

‡ Il. xxii. 395. *ἦ ῥα, καὶ Ἕκτορα δῖον ἀεικέα μήδετο ἔργα.*

§ Hêgêsias clearly implies this. The words *μισήσας ἐφ' οἷς ἐβεβούλευτο* must refer, not to the general resistance, but to the special attempt against Alexander's life.

‖ [And of the story of the death of Stêsagoras in Herodotus, vi. 38.]

a mere romantic invention. Arrian indeed * blames the act of destruction, because it could be no punishment to the real offenders, the Persians of a century and a half earlier. This is rather an objection to the whole war than to this particular action. No doubt to Alexander the destruction of the palace seemed a high symbolic rite, setting forth Grecian victory and barbarian overthrow. The deed was done against the remonstrance of Parmeniôn, who argued that it did not become Alexander to destroy what was his own, and that so to do would lead the Asiatics to look on him as a mere passing devastator, and not as a permanent sovereign. To Alexander such arguments would doubtless sound like the suggestions of base avarice to stay the hand of vengeance. Nor do we see, with Bishop Thirlwall, † that this view is at all inconsistent with the fact that he repented of the deed in after times. The destruction was the act of the Captain-general of Greece; the repentance was the sentiment of the King of Asia. When the deed was done, he did not yet feel that the home of the Barbarian was his own. With altered circumstances and altered feelings, he might well look back with regret on the ruin of one of the choicest ornaments of his empire.

Mr. Grote ‡ indeed would add to this symbolic and imposing manifestation of vengeance an act of quite another kind, namely, a general massacre of the male inhabitants of Persepolis, done, if not at Alexander's bidding, at least with his approval. In his version, in short, a city which seems to have made no resistance is described as undergoing the worst fate of a city taken by storm. This version he takes from Curtius § and Diodôros, || on whose accounts, we think, he somewhat improves. For neither author directly says that Alexander ordered the massacre, while Curtius does say that he stopped it in the end. Arrian says nothing about

* iii. 18.

† Vol. vi. p. 287. He argues again that this deliberate destruction is inconsistent with the reverence shown by Alexander to the tomb of Cyrus. But Cyrus was guiltless of Marathôn and Salamis, while the buildings at Persepolis were actually the works of Darius and Xerxes.

‡ Vol. xii. p. 239. § v. 6. 3–7. || xvii. 70, 71.

the whole story, nor yet, in our judgement, does Plutarch. Mr. Grote refers indeed to a letter of Alexander's quoted by Plutarch, in which the King speaks of a slaughter as having taken place by his order 'on grounds of state policy.' But this reference occurs in a most confused and incoherent passage, in which Plutarch jumbles together the passage of the Persian Gates and the seizure of the Persepolitan treasure. Of neither event does he give any geographical description more exact than is implied in the words 'Persia' and 'Persians.' We have no doubt that the slaughter referred to by Plutarch means the slaughter at the Persian Gates.* There Alexander met with a most desperate resistance. To bid his soldiers to refuse quarter, horrible as it seems to us, would be nowise repugnant to Greek laws of war. A slaughter there might very likely 'be profitable to him' (*αὐτῷ λυσιτελεῖν*) as tending to strike fear into others who might otherwise have thought of resistance. But no such motive of policy could apply to the massacre of an

* [The whole passage runs thus. Plut. Alex. 37. *Τῆς δὲ Περσίδος οὔσης διὰ τραχύτητα δυσεμβόλου καὶ φυλαττομένης ὑπὸ γενναιοτάτων Περσῶν (Δαρεῖος μὲν γὰρ ἐπεφεύγει) γίγνεταί τινος περίοδου κύκλον ἐχούσης οὐ πολὺν ἡγεμὼν αὐτῷ δίγλωσσος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ πατρὸς Λυκίου, μητρὸς δὲ Περσίδος γεγονώς· ὃν φασιν, ἔτι παιδὸς ὄντος Ἀλεξάνδρου, τὴν Πυθίαν προειπεῖν, ὡς λύκος ἔσται καθηγεμὼν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῆς ἐπὶ Πέρσας πορείας. . Φονον μὲν οὖν ἐνταῦθα πολὺν τῶν ἁλισκομένων γενέσθαι συνέπεσε· γράφει γὰρ αὐτὸς, ὡς νομίζων αὐτῷ τοῦτο λυσιτελεῖν ἐκέλευεν ἀποσφάττεσθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους· νομίσματος δ' εὑρεῖν πλῆθος ὅσον ἐν Σούσοις, τὴν δ' ἄλλην κατασκευὴν καὶ τὸν πλοῦτον ἐκκομισθῆναί φησι μυρίοις ὀρικοῖς ζεύγεσι καὶ πεντακισχιλίαις καμήλοις.*

It seems impossible to believe that this can refer to anything except the slaughter at the Persian Gates, which is described by Arrian (iii. 18) in the earlier part of the same chapter in which he describes the destruction of the palace at Persepolis. But it is clear from Arrian, as indeed the geography proves, that the two things were wholly distinct, and he has not a word to make us fancy that the destruction of the palace was accompanied by any slaughter. Curtius (v. 2), describes the slaughter at the Gates as well as the supposed slaughter at Persepolis. But between the two he brings in a moving story of the Macedonian army being met by four thousand Greek captives who had been mutilated in various ways by the Persians. Justin and Diodôros tell the same story, but cut the number down to eighty. If we accept this, we get, as in the cases of Tyre and Gaza, a special motive for the alleged cruelty done at Persepolis. But the whole story of these inferior writers seems to me to be not a little doubtful. Arrian alone gives us a clear and probable narrative.]

unarmed people. Such a deed would be fully open to the objection urged by Parmeniôn; it would not strike terror, but horror; if submission earned no better fate than resistance, all men would choose the bolder alternative. A massacre at Persepolis could only have been allowed, as Mr. Grote seems to imply, under the influence of some perverted and horrible form of the same feeling which prompted the destruction of the palace. But this feeling was something quite different from state policy; it was even, as Parmeniôn very soundly argued, quite repugnant to it. In fact Mr. Grote this time treats his authorities rather loosely. Diodôros and Curtius speak of the massacre; they also speak of the destruction of the palace as a drunken freak suggested by Thais. Arrian says nothing of the massacre, and speaks of the destruction of the palace as deliberate. Mr. Grote takes something from each narrative to work up, together with some touches of his own, into a picture of savage and cold-blooded ferocity on the part of Alexander which is not to be found in either. We follow Arrian; but the other story may well be, as is so often the case, the exaggeration or distortion of something which really happened. The destruction of the palace may have been accompanied by a licence to plunder; still more probably would it be seized on as an occasion for unlicensed plunder. In such a scene of confusion, some lives might easily be lost; and this would be quite groundwork enough for rhetorical historians to work up into the moving picture which we find in Curtius and Diodôros.*

* We have already referred to another horrible tale, which Mr. Grote accepts (vol. xii. p. 275), but on which Bishop Thirlwall is silent, namely, the massacre of the Branchidai in Sogdiana. On this we will remark thus much:—

First, that the second of the passages from Strabo which Mr. Grote quotes does not imply a massacre. Strabo merely says, *τὸ τῶν Βραγχιδῶν ἄστυ ἀνελεῖν.*

Secondly, that in the third passage the grounds of Alexander's supposed special devotion to the oracle of Branchidai are introduced by Strabo with great contempt: *προστραγῳδεῖ δὲ τούτοις ὁ Καλλισθένης, κ.τ.λ.*

Thirdly, that the whole story of the Sogdian Branchidai and their origin is very difficult to reconcile with the narrative of Herodotus. The tale in Strabo and Suidas reads very like a perversion of that in Herodotus vi. 20.

Perhaps, as we have already hinted, Alexander would have better consulted his own truest glory and the lasting benefit of mankind, had he kept himself to Tyre and Gaza, and had he never entered Persepolis at all. His strictly Hellenic mission called him to the conquest of those lands only which his successors, Macedonian, Roman, and Byzantine, proved in the end able to keep. But it was not in human nature to stop in such a career. Had he turned back when Parmeniôn counselled him, he must needs have been, as Eastern writers paint him, not only Iskender the Conqueror, but Iskender the Prophet. And a prophet perchance, in an indirect and unwitting way, he really was. As the pioneer of Hellenic cultivation, he became in the end the pioneer of Christianity. He paved the way for the intellectual empire of the Greek and for the political empire of the Roman.* And it was the extent of that empire, intellectual and political, which has marked the lasting extent of the religion of Christ. As the champion of the West against the East, Alexander foreshadowed the later championship of the Cross against the Crescent. He pointed dimly to a day when the tongue which he spoke and the system which he founded should become the badge and bulwark of a creed which to him would have seemed the most alien to all his schemes and all his claims. That creed first arose in a land where his name was cherished; it received its formal title in the greatest city of his successors; it allied itself with the intellectual life of that yet more famous city which still hands down to us his name. Jerusalem,† Antioch,

* Nowhere has fuller justice been done to the effects of Alexander's conquests than in the opening chapter of Mr. Finlay's 'Greece under the Romans.' The two great historians, of Greece independent and Greece enslaved, are here well contrasted. The historian of the Athenian Democracy curses the Macedonian as a destroyer; to the historian of the Byzantine Empire he seems entitled to the honours of a founder.

† It is not needful for our purpose to go into the famous details of Alexander's supposed visit to Jerusalem. But, if the tale, as it stands, be a fable, it at least points to favours bestowed by Alexander upon the Jews and to gratitude felt by the Jews towards Alexander. Cyrus and Alexander, the Persian and the Macedonian founder, fill a place in Jewish history most unlike that of most heathen rulers.

Alexandria, all revered the Macedonian conqueror as in some sort their founder or benefactor. The son of Ammon, the worshipper of Belus, made ready the path for a faith which should overthrow the idols of Egypt and Assyria. The heroes of a later age, who bore up against the Fire-worshipper and the Moslem, did but tread in his steps and follow out the career which he had opened. If he overthrew the liberties of Hellas in their native seat, he gave to the Hellenic mind a wider scope, and in the end a yet nobler mission. He was the forerunner of Heraclius bringing home the True Cross from its Persian bondage, of Leo beating back the triumphant Saracen from the walls of the city which Philip himself had besieged in vain. The victories of Christian Emperors, the teaching of Christian Fathers, the abiding life of the tongue and arts of Greece far beyond the limits of old Hellas, perhaps the endurance of Greek nationality down to our own times, all sprang from the triumphs of this, it may be, 'non-Hellenic conqueror,' but, in the work which he wrought, most truly Hellenic missionary. And though we may not give him in his own person the praise of results which neither he nor any mortal could have looked for, let us at least do justice to the great and noble qualities, the wide and enlightened aims, which marked his short career on earth. Many faults, and a few crimes, indeed stain his glory; but perhaps none of mortal birth ever went through such an ordeal. It would indeed have been a moral miracle if a fiery and impulsive youth had passed quite unscathed through such temptations as had never beset mortal man before. A youth, a Greek, a warrior, a King, he would have been more than man, had he looked down quite undazzled from the giddy height of what he might well deem more than human greatness. The fame of even the noblest of conquerors must yield to that of the peaceful benefactors of mankind, or of the warriors whose victories do but secure the liberties of nations. We do not place Alexander beside Leônidas or Washington, beside Ælfred or William the Silent. But we do protest against a view which places him in the same class with Attila and Jenghiz

and Timour. Their warfare was havoc for its own sake; his was conquest which went hand in hand with discovery and improvement. Theirs was a wild beast's thirst of blood, a barbarian's lust of mere dominion; his was 'an ambition which almost grew into one with the highest of which man is capable, the desire of knowledge and the love of good.' ‡ Such is the judgement of one who yields to none in the extent of his research, and who, if he may yield to some of his rivals in the brilliancy of original discovery, yet surpasses all in those calm and judicial faculties, without which research and brilliancy are vain. By the judgement of that great historian we still abide. Not the petty malignity of Niebuhr, not the weighty accusations of Grote, can avail to tear away the diadem of unfading glory which the gratitude of ages has fixed for ever on the brow of Alexander, the son of Philip, the Macedonian.*

* Thirlwall, vol. ii. p. 119.

# VI.

## GREECE DURING THE MACEDONIAN PERIOD.*

*Lectures on Ancient History, from the Earliest Times to the Taking of Alexandria by Octavianus; comprising the History of the Asiatic Nations, the Egyptians, Greeks, Macedonians, and Carthaginians.* By B. G. Niebuhr. Translated from the German edition of Dr. Marcus Niebuhr, by Dr. Leonhard Schmitz, &c. &c. London, 1852.

There is perhaps no part of the history of the civilized world which has of late years, in this country at least, received a degree of attention less proportioned to its importance than the later or Macedonian æra of Greece, under which name we must take in the contemporary history of those more distant lands which then became part of the Grecian world. True it is that this period is forced upon our notice from our earliest years; none is richer in that literature of anecdotes of which the Lives of Plutarch form the great storehouse; stories of Alexander and Pyrrhos rush naturally to the mind of the school-boy to furnish illustrations for his theme on the dangerous consequences of drunkenness or the need of bridling a hasty temper. But this precocious and super-

* [I have preserved this Essay, or at least some parts of it which seemed worth preserving, because it was in some sort the germ of the first volume—as yet, but I trust not for many years longer, the only volume—of my History of Federal Government. I have struck out a good deal, and I have transferred some passages to other Essays, where, in the present arrangement of the collection, they seemed more in place. But I have left my general sketch of Macedonian and Achaian affairs as a kind of introduction to the great subject with part of which I have already dealt, and which I hope one day to take up again.]

ficial knowledge seldom forms the groundwork of any after knowledge of a more solid kind. Philip and his son are household words in every mouth; but we suspect that they often fare like those standard works in every language, of which it is caustically said, that they are quoted by everybody but read by none. Of the 'Successors,' to give them their old technical name, men commonly have the vaguest notions; we suspect that not a few fair classical scholars would be sore put to if called on to draw any minute distinction between Dêmêtrios Poliorkêtês and Dêmêtrios Phalêreus. We suspect that there are plenty of learned persons who know the exact number of courses in the walls of Plataia, and who can accurately describe every evolution of Phormiôn's fleet, who still have nothing but their school-boy recollections of the Anabasis to remind them that deeds of no small note were done both among Greeks and Barbarians, at a later time than a certain sacrifice with which Tissaphernês honoured the Ephesian Artemis. The orators may perhaps carry on a few to behold the death-struggle of Athens; but that death-struggle is too often hastily assumed to have been that of Greece also. At all events, when Thucydides, Xenophôn, and Dêmosthenês have all failed us, none but the professed historian can be called on to wade through a period where he has to pick his way at every step amid the careless blunders of Plutarch and the impenetrable stupidity of Diodôros, where constant references have to be made to the scandalous gossip of Athênaios and the antiquarian twaddle of Pausanias, and where the very purest and most familiar atmosphere that we are allowed to breathe consists of the scattered fragments of Polybios and of those out-of-the-way decades of Livy which nobody ever thinks of reading.

There is doubtless force in all this; it at least shows that this period cannot be so easily made a subject of minute academical study as the history of the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars.* Had we the whole work of Polybios,

* [That is to say, Polybios could hardly be taken up as a *book*, as Thucydides is; but the part of Grecian history with which we are concerned might

the case would be widely different. It is sad indeed when, at some critical point of warfare or negotiation, the too familiar break in the text warns us that we have to fill up the gaps of the historian and the statesman with the double-filtered talk of moralists, topographers, and anecdote-mongers. But it is something to have even such fragments as we still have of such a work as that of Polybios is still. To him, through a happy though mournful fate which befell no other historian, the old local politics of Greece and the wide-spreading diplomacy of the Eternal City were alike living and familiar things. His lot was cast, now among party feuds in Bœotia and Arkadia and border warfare of Messênê and Megalopolis, now among those scenes of vast intrigue and conquest which, to a vulgar mind, might have made the events of his youth seem but combats of the kites and crows. He who had borne the urn of the last of Hellenic heroes—the last who had organized a Grecian commonwealth for war and peace, the last who had fought, Greek against Greek, at no Macedonian or Roman bidding—lived to stand beside the conqueror of mighty Carthage, when he wept over the predestined fate of Rome amid the ashes of her proudest rival.*

While then our great authority has come down to us only in a patched and fragmentary state, it is no wonder that the want of a text-book is enough to frighten away those who are used to such guidance as that of Herodotus and Thucydides from venturing themselves among the shoals and quicksands of so dangerous a coast. And, besides this, we must allow that the history itself is, in many respects, far from an attractive one. We are working among the dregs of a nation, the vigour of whose political and literary life has for ever passed away. Conscious speculation on the science of commonwealths and

well be taken up as a *subject* or *period*. I am glad to see it recommended for this purpose in Mr. A. W. Ward's suggestions for the reform of the History Tripos at Cambridge.]

* [On the position of Polybios see History of Federal Government, i. 228. I also found something to say about him in my Rede Lecture on the Unity of History.]

kingdoms has taken the place of the inborn and experimental wisdom of Themistoklês and Periklês. The grammarian and the imitative poet strive, at a still wider distance, to make up for those glorious days of Homer or of Æschylus which are gone from us for ever. It is a shock to old and high associations when, in the heading or the index, we see the deathless names of Thermopylai and Salamis attached to unfamiliar and comparatively ignoble conflicts. The city of Teukros and Evagoras so keenly suggests the memory of its more famous parent,* that one is grieved to find that so glorious a name now recalls only the selfish warfare of Macedonian robbers. The very spot where Leônidas had fallen beholds indeed Europe revenge its old wrongs upon the rival continent, but our sympathies are well nigh called forth for the fallen despot, when it is not the patriot fervour of old Greece, but the cold and selfish ambition of the masters of the world before which the pride of Eastern tyrants has now to bend.

In short, there is quite enough to account for, though we cannot bring ourselves to think that there is enough to justify, the neglect into which this part of history has commonly fallen. We have always looked upon the period from the second battle of Mantineia to the reduction of Macedonia and Achaia into Roman provinces† as by no means lacking either in interest to the reader or in value to the general historian of Greece and of the world. The rise of the Macedonian state under its two great princes, the spread of Hellenism in Asia through the conquests of Alexander, the great political phænomenon of the Achaian League, even the momentary glory of Young Sparta under the last Kleomenês, are surely events of a kind at once highly important and highly interesting. They are less important and less in-

* We may here reverse the words of Æschylus —

. . . . Σαλαμῖνά τε, τᾶς νῦν ματρόπολις τᾶνδ'·
αἰτία στεναγμῶν. Pers. 864.

† [By the reduction of Macedonia and Achaia into Roman provinces, I doubtless meant what happened in B.C. 146. But, though Achaian liberty came practically to an end at that time, Achaia did not formally become a Roman province till long after. See History of Federal Government, i. 705.]

teresting, we fully grant, than the old days of Marathôn and Thermopylai, of Arginousai and Aigospotamos, but they are still very far from deserving to be wholly passed by in a historical survey either of Greece or of the world at large.

We were therefore naturally well pleased to find thorough sympathy with these feelings set forth by no less an authority than Niebuhr, and the more so as Mr. Grote seemed to have fallen into the common error of undervaluing this period. Niebuhr, on the other hand, we are told, had made these times the object of more careful study than any other part of ancient history, and in his great course of professorial lectures by far the most elaborate and valuable part is given to its examination, while the lecturer himself several times directly sets forth his opinion that this period had been in general unduly neglected.

The time with which we have now to do naturally divides itself into two great periods—the age of *Philip and Alexander and their immediate Successors;* and that of the *Achaian League and the Antigonid dynasty.*

The first period takes in the organization of Macedonia under Philip, first as a Greek state, and then as the ruling Greek state, the wonderful career of Alexander, and the endless wars among his immediate Successors till the kingdoms which they founded were brought into something like a settled order. Now, except the romantic tales of Alexander's own conquests, there is but little in this period to please, and in its last stage there is, at first sight, little to interest. The reign of Philip was a triumph of slavery over freedom, and it wrought the degradation of the city to which every real student of history, every real lover of literature and art, must for ever look as the most sacred shrine of his intellectual pilgrimage. Again, the last stage, the wars of the Successors, loses the interest which attaches to the glorious struggle of Dêmosthenês, and sinks, at first sight, into little beyond a mere record of crimes.

While the narrative of this period by Bishop Thirlwall is

by far the greatest portion of his great work, the way in which Niebuhr has treated it is one which we cannot but call altogether unworthy both of his intellectual and moral nature. We may believe that this defect was chiefly owing to the peculiar form of lectures, and that in a History of Greece, answering to his greatest work, he would have written in quite another way. Lectures delivered extempore, and printed, without the author's revision, from notes taken by the pupils who heard them, are something which must be measured by quite a different standard from an elaborate work written in the writer's study, with every means for reference and second thoughts. It would be vain to look in these volumes for entire freedom from slips and contradictions, but it would be unfair, under such circumstances, to make them the subject of unfavourable criticism. It shows in fact the wonderful range of Niebuhr's knowledge, and his still more wonderful power of applying his knowledge without external help, that the amount of errors or inconsistencies which his editor has pointed out, or which we have found out for ourselves, does not greatly exceed in number or importance the allowance which would be fairly pardonable in a work of the same bulk written or dictated at the author's fireside. The lectures also, in their present form, have a peculiar value, as shewing us the workings of Niebuhr's mind, and the manner in which his opinions were worked out. There are many passages in which it is clear, not only that the lecturer spoke extempore, but that the thoughts themselves came into the speaker's mind while he was in the act of speaking. Of course such illustrations or conjectures do not carry with them the weight of Niebuhr's mature judgement, but they are specially valuable as illustrating Niebuhr's own self. Again, in his History Niebuhr appears as far more happy in what he thought than in his way of telling us why he thought it. Many of his views need only to be stated in order at once to carry conviction with them,* but

* [When I wrote this, I could hardly have thrown off that idolatry of Niebuhr which was the natural result of the Oxford training of thirty years back; not that the idol of the present moment is any improvement.]

the reader's confidence is anything but increased by toiling through the maze of argument in which theorem and demonstration are confused together. In the Lectures, on the other hand, all is clear and straightforward; results are given and little more, which is just what we want. It is enough to be told Niebuhr's opinion; the grounds of it, for the most part, any other man could explain better than himself.

But, on the other hand, this mode of delivery has brought out certain characteristics which, while they greatly enhance the value of the work as an index of the author's mind, certainly lessen its trustworthiness as an historical guide. This is specially the case in the period with which we are now dealing. Niebuhr was a man of ardent and indeed hasty feelings; his love and his enmity were strongly felt and strongly expressed, and he had a wonderful power of throwing himself into the feelings of past ages, and of looking on the men of two thousand years back in the light of living friends and foes. Now all these qualities, as could not fail to be the case, appear in these lectures in their most exaggerated form. In throwing himself into the cause of right and freedom Niebuhr failed to do justice to those whom circumstances made its enemies. In his admiration of the high, heroic, unselfish, virtue of Dêmosthenês, he sometimes forgot that language which was natural in the mouth of the orator in the Pnyx was no longer becoming when it fell from the mouth of the Professor in his lecture-room at Bonn. The business of Dêmosthenês was to call on his hearers to arm against Philip or Alexander; the business of Niebuhr was calmly and judicially to set before his hearers the right and wrong of the cause in which those mighty men were the actors. The first aspect of Niebuhr's treatment of this period is that of simple unscrupulous malignity towards everything bearing the Macedonian name. The two great Kings are reviled to an extent which might have wearied the willing ears of Dêmos himself; their crimes are exaggerated, their virtues depreciated, their motives distorted; every piece of scandalous gossip is raked up against them on evidence

which Niebuhr himself is the first to cast aside when it tells against his own favourites. Now in all this we see no ground for charging Niebuhr with intentional disingenuousness; we fully believe that in the solitude of his closet he would have drawn his pen through most of the passages of which we complain; he must certainly have been both a worse historian and a worse man than we have ever deemed him, if he could, in his calmer moments, have ventured to brand Alexander as the murderer of his father, and to sully one of the most amiable features of his character with the foulest of imputations. We believe the case simply to be that Niebuhr had so thoroughly thrown himself into the position of Dêmosthenês and Hyperidês, that he had become even less capable than they were of doing justice to their mightiest adversary.

From Niebuhr we may turn to our own great historian of the same period. If Bishop Thirlwall is not so ardent as Niebuhr for Athens and Dêmosthenês, it is because it is neither his nature nor his principle to be so ardent about anything. But he shows with equal clearness where his sympathies lie, and which side he holds to be the side of truth and justice. Here and there a burst of indignant eloquence shows that his convictions are as deeply rooted as those of Niebuhr himself. But he never lowers himself to reviling or misrepresentation of the other side. On his showing, we see in Philip the very founder of intrigue and diplomacy, unscrupulous when his ends were to be served, but far from lacking generous feelings, and never allowing himself to be hurried into an useless crime. It is highly unfair to class men of this stamp with monsters like Ochus or Nero, Rufus or John, Gian-Maria Visconti or Galeazzo Sforza, who seem to have revelled in evil for its own sake. To raise his own country, to make Macedonia a Greek state and the first of Greek states, was surely no mean or paltry ambition, no worse surely than exploits which have attached lasting honour to the names of many Christian potentates. And Alexander, whom for two thousand years the world has rejoiced to reckon among the

first of its heroes, can never be changed into a mere monster of wickedness and weakness, even though the wand of the historical Kirkê be grasped by the hand of Barthold Niebuhr.

Between the years B.C. 280 and 270, we may place the boundary which parts the two periods into which we have divided the later history of Greece. The storm of Macedonian conquest has passed by, and its results now begin to appear in the comparatively settled state of Grecian Europe; that of Grecian Asia, so far as it can be said to have ever been settled at all, may fairly date from the field of Issos. The deaths of Dêmêtrios, Pyrrhos, Lysimachos, and Seleukos, the Gaulish invasion and the first great display of power on the part of the Ætolians, the establishment of the Antigonid dynasty in Macedonia and the first beginnings of the Achaian League, all come within about twelve years of each other, a period of far smaller practical extent at that point of Grecian history than it was in either an earlier or a later generation. From this point Niebuhr's treatment of his subject wonderfully improves. He seems to have got over his abstract hatred of Macedonians; he can see some merit in the later Antigonids, while his treatment of the affairs of the League is most just and valuable. It was evidently, as his editor tells us, a favourite period, which he dealt with thoroughly as a labour of love. And, when we look at the whole time under his guidance, we soon see how great a mistake it is to look on the whole period with the usual scorn. It is a time which sets before us the political fall of Greece, accompanied by an increased spread of Grecian influence over the world; it shows to us the slow and sure advance of Rome, and how, in the meshes of her policy, the former masters of the civilized world were led down the gradual descent of alliance, dependence, subjugation, and amalgamation. Surely every one who has traced Grecian history and literature through its earlier and more brilliant stages must feel some share of what Niebuhr calls a natural 'Pietas' towards Greece, which is of itself

enough to make us wish to follow out its history to the end. Wretched indeed as was the last century and a half of Athenian existence,* it is still the duty of those who have walked in the full blaze of its earlier day, at least to watch the glimmering light till it is wholly put out. And again, Athens is not Greece; other states will give us real political and historical lessons down to the last moment.

But while Greece itself is thus falling, Greeks are rising to the height of their intellectual sway in other lands. The spread of Hellenism in the East through the Macedonian conquests is in itself a phænomenon worthy of study, and it becomes of yet greater importance when we think of its bearing on the spread of Christianity, and its close connexion with the Apocryphal, and even with the New Testament history. The Greek language became the badge at once of European civilization and of Orthodox Christianity; Asia Minor was really hellenized; Syria and Egypt had only a few great Hellenic cities scattered over them. Hence these latter countries first fell aside into heresies or national churches, and afterwards became an easy prey to Mahometan conquest. The thoroughly Greek provinces, on the other hand, withstood Monophysite and Nestorian, Saracen and Turk, for many ages longer. When Gibbon spoke of Antioch retaining 'her old allegiance to Christ and Cæsar,' he doubtless meant a scoff, but he none the less set forth a great historical truth.

Again, if the gradual advance of Roman power, and its still more gradual decline, contain, as in truth they do, the whole history of the civilized world, it is surely no uninstructive task to trace the steps by which Rome gradually wound the toils of her crooked diplomacy around the fairest of her conquests. Bishop Thirlwall truly says that in such arts the Roman Senate surpassed every cabinet, ancient and

* [Again I must have forgotten that Athens, still less than Achaia, did not formally come to an end in B.C. 146. It must be remembered that Hadrian was an Archon, and Constantine a General, of the Athenian Democracy.]

modern; and it was to them, more than to her pilum and broadsword, that Rome owed the reduction of Macedonia and Achaia into provinces of a city of which Dêmosthenês and Philip may have barely heard the name. And again, if we remember how the hellenized nations took up the name and position of Romans, how they kept on the political life of the Roman Empire in a Megarian and a Milesian* colony, for hundreds of years after the old Rome had forgotten her ancient mission, it can be no fruitless speculation to trace the steps by which the first impulse was given to so strange and lasting an union between the intellectual supremacy of Greece and the political eternity of Rome.

And when we carry on our view beyond the limits of direct cause and effect, when we take in the wider field of analogy and historical parallelism, this period becomes clothed with yet deeper interest. The history of old Greece and the history of mediæval Italy can never be thoroughly understood unless the two are constantly employed to illustrate one another.† And the fall of each country presents a picture, in which, though the likeness is certainly less strong than in the earlier periods, it is still marked enough to make it worth while to point out some of the chief features, both where the parallel clearly exists and where it must be allowed to fail.

As Greece was the elder, the more native, in every sense the nobler, of the two great developements of republican splendour, it seems only right that Greece should, even in her corruption and her fall, keep more of dignity than her mediæval antitype.‡

* [Trapezous, which became, ages after, the seat of that Empire of Trebizond which outlived that of Constantinople, was a colony of Sinôpê, and so a granddaughter of Milêtos.]

† [I have cut short this comparison, which I afterwards expanded into the First Essay in this Series. But I have left one or two points on which I said little or nothing there.]

‡ [This may seem to contradict what I have said above in p. 30, but I do not think that it really does so. The point is that, after the wars of the Successors, Greece had a time of revived freedom, which Italy, since the time of the French, Spanish, and German wars, never had till our own day.]

'Magna feres tacitas solatia mortis ad umbras
A tanto cecidisse viro.' *

Italy, in fact, has no parallel to the age of Philip and Alexander, when Greece might forget her bondage in the dazzling glory of a hero who boasted of her blood, and whose pride it was to bear her language and civilization into realms which had never obeyed the voice of Assyrian or Persian despot. It is clear that both the great Macedonians really loved and revered Greece, Athens above all. To humble her politically was an unavoidable part of their policy; but they always kept themselves from doing her any wrong beyond which their policy called for. They felt as Greeks, and they had no temptation to destroy what they claimed as their mother country. They had clearly no wish to swallow up Greece in Macedonia, but rather to make Macedonia, as a Greek state, the ruling power of Greece.† Such was undoubtedly the aim of Philip, and it was that of Alexander too, till, from the throne of the Great King, he may have learned to look on both Greece and Macedonia as little more than corners of his empire, nurseries of his most valiant soldiers.

But the desolation of Greece under Alexander's immediate Successors very fairly answers to the desolation of Italy by French, Spanish, Swiss, and German invaders. As in the later parallel, the history of these endless wars is indeed little more than a revolting record of crime; still we cannot help looking even on them with somewhat more of favour than they receive from Niebuhr. Selfish and unscrupulous as they were, we cannot set them down as mere monsters; even the blood-stained Kassandros must not be ranked with a Phalaris or an Eccelino. Treachery and murder were familiar to them all when they served their purpose; but, when they were once established in their kingdoms, we do not find that they became such mere savage scourges of mankind as Kings and rulers have too often shown themselves. Ptolemy's hands were no cleaner than those

* [I have since used this quotation for another purpose. 'Willelmus Magnus' may surely rank in the same class as 'Alexander Magnus.']

† See above, p. 178.

of his fellows; he won his way to his throne by equal crime; yet when he was once seated there, the unanimous voice of history has placed him in the first rank of sovereigns. Such rulers as Augustus, as Francesco Sforza, as our own Cnut, form a far truer parallel to the better class of Macedonian princes, to Antigonos, Ptolemy, or Seleukos, than the mere loathsome tyrants either of classical or of mediæval Italy.

For one prince of these troubled times, whom Niebuhr holds up to special hatred, we must confess a certain tenderness,—it may be a weakness. This is Dêmêtrios Poliorkêtês, the Alkibiadês or Antonius of his age. An ambition not only selfish, but utterly reckless and extravagant, a private profligacy of the wildest and most revolting kind, a haughty carelessness of others, and all this joined with an utter lack of those arts of the ruler and the statesman which distinguish a Seleukos and a Ptolemy, might, at first sight, seem to stamp him with hopeless infamy, as the vilest specimen of a vile time. But, as in his Athenian prototype—open to all these charges but the last, and towards whom Niebuhr is by no means harsh—there is still something about Dêmêtrios which renders it impossible to look on him with unmixed dislike. In his first expedition we may fairly attribute to him a really generous ambition to become the chosen prince of independent Hellas, and as such Athens at least was ready to receive him. And when we think how Athens received him, we may deem that it was nothing wonderful if a fiery and voluptuous youth had his head utterly turned by such incense as had never before been offered to mortal man. Dêmêtrios would have had no claim to rank even as a naturalized Greek, could he have gone unscathed through a milder ordeal than that of being formally acknowledged as the peer of Zeus and Athênê, and of having his will solemnly declared to be the measure of holiness and justice. It is perhaps only because we judge him by a higher standard that we speak so harshly of his private life; that it went far beyond the bounds even of Athenian licence cannot be denied, but it would have seemed nothing wonderful in the seraglios of Nineveh

or Susa. He seems to have won the affections of his many wives, and he certainly was not in the habit of divorcing or murdering them, like many of his contemporaries and successors. The harmony which reigned between himself and his father, and afterwards between himself and his son, forms a beautiful picture in itself, and it is a remarkable characteristic of the whole family, in contrast to the fearful domestic tragedies which disgraced almost every other Macedonian palace. Till the quarrel in the last generation between Perseus and the last Dêmêtrios, no Antigonid ever stained his hands with the blood of father, son, or brother; none ever even stood forth as the enemy or rival of his nearest kinsman. Against the Besieger himself no special deed of blood or perfidy is distinctly proved; haughty and overbearing in prosperity, faults which lost him the Macedonian throne, he does not seem even there to have sunk into an actual oppressor. Adversity no man knew better how to bear; the rebound was always greater than the fall. Throughout his whole career, whether dealing with Ptolemy, with Rhodes, or with Athens, we see touches of a generous and chivalrous spirit, which he shares with Alexander and Pyrrhos, but with perhaps no other prince of his age. Surely he deserves at least as much tenderness as Niebuhr grants, with full justice we allow, to his descendant, degenerate indeed, but not wholly unlike him, the last Philip of Macedon.

And if Italy has no exact parallel to the age of Philip and Alexander, still less has she a parallel to the days of revived freedom which in Greece followed the age of the Successors. Stern as was the doom of Greece, it was still not to be compared to the doom of her antitype; her race was as yet by no means run, the day of her final overthrow was still far off. Even during the period of confusion, Greece was never of so little account among the struggles of her masters as Italy was during the analogous time; her attachment was eagerly sought after, both from the reverence which she inspired, and still more from the substantial force which she still held, a force quite enough in most cases to turn the scale between

two contending potentates. And when things began to fall back again into something like settled order, a new æra of freedom and glory arose, shorter and less bright indeed than her elder day, but still at least a worthy old age for such a youth. And it was the more true and vigorous because it was no mere superficial restoration, but a developement really fitted to the political circumstances of the age. With this period Italy has nothing to compare, unless we may venture to see in the successful working of constitutional government in Piedmont at the present moment, a harbinger of still brighter days for Italy than those of federal liberty in Greece.*

By one of those strange cycles which are often found in history, the last people who kept up the glory of the Grecian name were the people who first came forth into historic being from the darkness of the old præ-historic time. It was as Achaians that the Greeks gathered round the walls of Ilios; it was as Achaians that they fell beneath the tardy vengeance of a people whose boast it was to trace their origin to that sacred source. The cities of Periklês and Epameinôndas had sunk into utter insignificance; Lykourgeian Sparta had indeed done a work worthy of her old fame when she drove back the hero of Epeiros from her gates; but it was the last work of Lykourgeian Sparta; as the city of the Hêrakleids she had still to run a short course of glory, but as the city of the Dorian she was no more. Achaia, a land which had lived on through Persian, Peloponnesian, and Macedonian warfare, perhaps at once the most respectable and the most insignificant part of proper Greece, now becomes the field for this second crop of Grecian freedom and dignity, though it must be confessed that the harvest was for the most part reaped for her by generals and statesmen who were Achaians only by adoption.

The great value of the Achaian League to the student of history comes from its being the best known example of the ancient Federal constitutions, indeed the only genuine confederation of equal cities which ever rose to much importance in

* [Cf. the note on p. 51.]

Greece itself.* Mr. Grote has fully set forth how deeply the pervading notion of the 'autonomous city' was rooted in the Grecian mind; in truth, the more highly developed and civilized a Grecian state was, the more strongly did it cleave to its separate independence, the more it shrank from Federal relations with any other. It might find it expedient or needful to acknowledge, to a certain extent, the external supremacy, the ἡγεμονία, of some ruling city, but no Grecian town in historic times willingly consented to sink its separate being in any general confederacy. This is the more to be noted, because several phænomena are found which at first sight look very like such an union, but which at all events differ very widely from its fully developed Achaian form.

A Federal union of the whole nation was a thing which was never thought of; the Amphiktyonic Council has often been mistaken for such an one; but such an opinion is now thoroughly thrown aside by scholars. In fact, the existence of the Amphiktyonic Council tells the other way; without being really a Federal union, it came near enough to such an union to have suggested the idea, and to have formed the germ of such an institution, had the want of it been at all felt by the Greek mind. If indeed the Council had ever taken such a character on itself, its first act must certainly have been to pass a Reform Bill, as its constitution was strikingly like that of the House of Commons up to 1832. The Malians and Phthiotic Achaians, 'rotten' states, in which the Tagos of

* Hellenic cities beyond the bounds of proper Greece seem to have had far less dislike to Federal relations, doubtless because, as strangers scattered in a foreign land, they often found it needful to join together against powerful barbarian neighbours. Thus we find several confederations, more or less close, among the Hellenic and hellenized states in Asia Minor. There was also the great Olynthian Confederacy, of which Mr. Grote has given so clear an account, and whose forcible suppression was one of the most crying sins of Spartan ascendency. But here there was one predominant city, which at once distinguishes it from our Achaian state.

[On the Olynthian Confederacy see History of Federal Government, i. 190-197. Later thoughts on the matter carried me further away from Mr. Grote's view of the constitution of the Confederacy. But none the less thanks are owing to him for first bringing out the Olynthian scheme into its fitting prominence.]

Thessaly 'enjoyed,' according to the modern euphemism, 'considerable influence,' must have gone the way of Gatton and Old Sarum. In like manner, the same principle which gave parliamentary being to Birmingham and Manchester must have given distinct votes to Sparta, Corinth, and Argos, and the system which gave an enlarged representation to the English counties might even have bestowed the Amphiktyonic franchise upon the enlightened and independent freeholders of Arkadia. In truth, the one fact that the Amphiktyonic votes were reckoned by tribes, and not by cities, at once shuts it out from our present comparison, and shows it to be a mere vestige of a bygone state of things, alien to the common tendency of Grecian feeling in its best days. In truth, 'the shadow at Delphi'* hardly pretended to any political functions at all, till it suited the policy of Thebes and of Philip to push it into a factitious importance.

The other confederations which meet our notice among the Grecian states may well have suggested ideas to the founders of the League, but none of them, not even the Arkadian League under Lykomêdês, so thoroughly forestalled it as to show, in actual and lasting working, a combination of many equal cities united, for all external purposes, into one indivisible Federal republic. The League stands distinguished, alike from mere alliances, however close they may be made by traditional sentiment—from combinations of cities which, like that of Bœotia, acknowledge a greater or less degree of supremacy in some leading state—and from those irregular unions among the less developed branches of the Greek nation, which were confederations of tribes rather than of cities. The Ætolians, Akarnanians, and the like, never reached to the full developement of Greek city life. One of these unions, that of the brigands of Ætolia, attained a strange and unnatural amount of power during the times we are now considering; but every recorded act of that confederation only shows how utterly incapable it was of exercising political

* Οὐκοῦν εἴθες καὶ κομιδῇ σχέτλιον . . . . προς πάντας περὶ τῆς ἐν Δελφοῖς σκιᾶς νυνὶ πολεμῆσαι ; Dem. de Pace. ad fin.

power, and in truth its reckless conduct brought about the final ruin of Greece.*

Unlike all these, the Achaian League was, in the strictest sense, a confederation of cities united on equal terms. The cities of the original Achaia, which formed its kernel, seem to have been united in the same kind of way before the Macedonian times. These therefore did little more than restore an old connexion on still closer terms; but all the historical importance of the League was owing to its non-Achaian members, Sikyôn, Corinth, and Megalopolis. For all external purposes the united cities formed one state; no single city could treat with a foreign power, still less could it make war upon any other member of the League. But the several towns still kept much more than a mere municipal being, as is shown by the very fact that it was needful to forbid diplomatic intercourse with foreign powers. Still, it is clear that the general tendency of the League was to a far closer union, even in internal matters, than Greece had ever before witnessed among distinct cities. In the end Polybios could boast, with only a slight exaggeration, that all Peloponnêsos was united under the same government and the same laws. Any tendency to separation seems, unless when stirred up by foreign intrigues, to have been wholly confined to those cities which, like Sparta and Messênê, had been unwillingly incorporated with the League, and which therefore added nothing to its real strength.

The constitution of the League was professedly democratic: and herein it affords us a great political lesson, as the first instance in Greece of a democratic government on so large a scale. Now this mere fact of its extent, to say nothing of any unlikeness in the characters of the two nations, at once brought with it most important differences in the Achaian democracy, as compared with the typical de-

* [This is true; but the mere constitutional forms of the Ætolian League differed very little from those of Achaia.

The Akarnanian League on the other hand, though always secondary in point of power, was of all Greek commonwealths the most upright in its policy and the most faithful to its engagements.]

mocracy of Athens.* In the new state the purely democratic ideal had to be greatly modified. Every free Achaian of full age, no less than every free Athenian, might attend and speak in the sovereign Assembly of his country; but then that Assembly was not held weekly at his own doors, but twice a year in a distant city. Such a franchise could have but little attraction for any but the high-born and wealthy, who alone could afford the cost of the journey, and who alone would be likely to be listened to when the Assembly met. Again, such a franchise, the exercise of which came so seldom, could of itself have given but little political education; and, though each citizen had his share in the internal management of his own town, yet a vote in the petty local affairs of Dymê or Tritaia must have been a very different thing from a voice in the direction of the vast and complicated relations of a ruling city like Athens. As the meetings of the Assembly were so rare, the powers of individual magistrates were necessarily far greater than could have been endured under the Athenian system; and here it is perhaps that we find the most marked difference between the two constitutions. At Athens, as we have seen, Dêmos himself was the real executive power; magistrates were the mere ministerial instruments of his sovereign will. But the Achaian Assembly took up only six days in its two ordinary sessions; therefore, when no extraordinary Assembly happened to be summoned, the sovereign authority was suspended for three hundred and fifty-three days in each year, during which time the executive power had to be lodged somewhere. The natural result was a far nearer approach than Athens ever beheld to the system of modern commonwealths, monarchical or republican. We find foreshadowings by no means dim of a Council of Ministers and of a President of the Republic. There was a Senate which held far greater authority, and was far more independent of the Assembly, than the mere Committee of Five Hundred at Athens; there was a Cabinet of

* [A picture of the Athenian Democracy which followed here I have transferred to the Essay specially devoted to that subject.]

ten Dêmiourgoi, a body which Dêmos would never have borne; lastly, the Republic had a 'single person' at its head. For the two Generals whom the League in its first form chose year by year a single one was afterwards substituted, who was indeed appointed by annual election, but who, during his year of office, held a position such as no Athenian had ever held since the decennial Archons came to an end. During his time of office he was clearly the very soul of the State.* Not indeed that Aratos exercised a greater practical authority than Periklês; but, while the Athenian, a single citizen to whom the other citizens habitually looked for wise counsels, owed all his influence to his personal qualities, the Sikyonian stood before his countrymen with all the weight of official position, like a Premier or President of our own day. We do not indeed find that any Achaian General ever showed any wish to change his elective and temporary magistracy into a hereditary empire, or even into a consulate for life; but his place was a place of dignity enough to lead more than one well-disposed Tyrant to lay aside his sovereignty and to unite his city to the League.† Lydiadas doubtless enjoyed a far greater personal influence over Grecian politics as the elective magistrate of the Achaian democracy than he had ever wielded as irresponsible despot of the single city of Megalopolis.

It is clear that, where there was a President and Cabinet, as we may fairly call them, of such a kind, the whole executive power must have been lodged in their hands, and that, even without formal enactments to that effect, they must have held a practical initiative in the Assembly at least as fully as a modern Ministry holds it. Moreover the right of individual citizens to make proposals in the Assembly was very narrowly restricted by law; a precaution which was perhaps not needless in a session of three days. The real business of the Assembly was to choose the magistrates, and to say Yea or Nay to their proposals. After the somewhat unfair monopoly which Aratos so long enjoyed had come to an end, it was clearly in the election of the General that the parliamentary warfare of

* See Thirlwall, viii. 93. † See Polyb. ii. 41, 44.

the League found its fullest scope. We often find the policy of the Republic fluctuating from year to year, according as one party or another had succeeded in placing its leader at the head of the state. Each election might, in fact, bring on what we should call a change of Ministry; but to the grand device of constitutional monarchies Achaia never reached. Every year the Ministry and its policy were put in jeopardy, but, when that ordeal was past, they were safe for another twelvemonth. Achaia had not hit upon our happy plan by which the executive power is held at the silent pleasure of the Legislature, by which the real rulers may be kept on for an indefinite time, or may be sent away at a moment's notice, according as they behave themselves.*

These parliamentary functions were probably discharged by a few of the leading men of each city, together with a somewhat undue proportion of the inhabitants of Aigion. Though, by the Achaian constitution, the presence of any disproportioned number of citizens of a particular town had no direct effect on the reckoning of the votes, still the men of Aigion must have had an unfair monopoly as long as the Assembly was invariably held in their city. Philopoimên acted like a truly liberal statesman when he procured that its meetings should be held in each city of the League in turn. But so long as the place of meeting was confined to any one city, Aigion, as one of the less considerable members of the Confederation, was a good choice; had the Assembly been always held at Corinth or Megalopolis, one can fancy that some pretension to supremacy on the part of those great cities might have gradually arisen.

The practical working of such a system was doubtless that of a mild and liberal aristocracy,† which, existing solely on sufferance, could not venture upon tyrannical or unpopular measures. The material well-being of the people may have

* [The result of the general election of 1868 showed that, under the English constitution, this power can on occasion be exercised, not only by the House of Commons, but by the people themselves in their polling-booths.]

† [*Aristocracy* in the strictest sense; not its counterfeit *oligarchy*.]

been equal to that of Attica in its best days, but for the intense vigour of Athenian political and intellectual life there was no room. The individual Achaian was a free citizen, and not the slave of a Tyrant or of an oligarchy; but he was not himself Minister, Senator, and Judge, in the same way as a member of the typical Democracy. His personal happiness, as far as human laws can secure it, may have been equally great, and his political life was certainly more peaceful; but he could not, by the hand which he held up or by the bean which he dropped, exercise a conscious influence over the greatest questions of his own age, and an unconscious one over those of all the ages that were to come.

One more remark must be made. The votes in the Assembly were not counted by heads, but by cities. Whether one Corinthian or a thousand were present, Corinth had one vote, and no more. Here, as Niebuhr justly says, lay the great fault of the constitution, that great cities like Argos and Corinth had no greater weight in the councils of the united nation than the petty towns of the original Achaia. Had any proportion of this kind been observed, as it afterwards was in the Lykian Confederation, the constitution would have been very nearly a representative one; and, in such a case, the final step could hardly have been delayed of each city sending just as many deputies as it had votes in the Assembly. *

* [I am not sure that, when I wrote this, or even when I wrote what I said upon the same matter in the History of Federal Government, i. 273, 274, I fully understood that in a perfect Federal constitution it is needful to have two Houses, one of which represents the sovereignty of the united nation, and in which the vote to be taken is that of the majority of the whole people or their representatives, while the other House represents the separate sovereignty of the several Cantons, and must give an equal voice to each Canton, great or small. This object is gained in the United States by the Senate and House of Representatives, as distinct and equal branches of the Federal legislature. In Switzerland it is gained, not only by the same constitution of the Federal Legislature, the *Ständerath* and *Nationalrath* answering to the Senate and House of Representatives, but also by the distinct votes of the Cantons and of the People which are taken in the case of

But while the great political phænomenon of the League is certainly the first object of attraction in later Grecian history, there are not wanting others of no small importance. The history of the Macedonian monarchy is in itself one of high interest. A small nation, of uncertain origin in its first beginnings, gradually swells into a civilized kingdom; under several energetic princes it becomes Greek and the ruling state of Greece; it overthrows the throne of Cyrus, and for a while the single realm of Macedon stretches from the Hadriatic to the Hyphasis. Such an empire as this could not be lasting; but the Macedonian race gave rulers and a lasting civilization to vast regions of the East, and the Kingdom of Macedonia itself kept its place as the leading power of Greece, as the dreaded rival of Rome. This is hardly the history of so worthless a people as Niebuhr, and even Thirlwall, seem to deem them. We cannot go along with Niebuhr in the way in which he identifies the Macedonian royalty with that of Eastern kingdoms. It is more like an irregular mediæval monarchy, which, under a weak prince, sank into mere anarchy, while an able and popular prince had everything his own way. The Macedonian government was indeed essentially monarchical; there was no formal constitution, and probably few or no written laws; the absence of a Legislative Assembly is expressly asserted by Polybios;* and Dêmosthenês

a constitutional amendment. No arrangement of votes in a single assembly, whether primary or representative, can in the same way give their due weight to each of the two elements of that divided sovereignty which is the essence of a Federal state. But there is no need to blame either the Achaian or the Lykian Confederation for not at once reaching to the latest refinements of modern political science. We must always remember that in all these commonwealths representation was unknown, though, as specially in the case of the Lykian League, they often trembled on the very verge of it. And in Greece at least, the coordinate power of two legislative chambers was altogether unknown, though something like it may be seen in the relations between the Senate and the Popular Assembly in the best days of Rome.]

* xxxi. 12. *Μακεδόνας ἀήθεις ὄντας δημοκρατικῆς καὶ συνεδριακῆς πολιτείας.*

[I perhaps inferred too much from this passage, which relates to the difficulties which the Macedonians felt in adapting themselves to the constitutions of the four commonwealths into which Macedonia was divided by the Romans after the fall of Perseus. We do not know exactly what the constitutions of

witnesses that the personal agency of the King himself was the primary moving power of everything,* contrasting Macedonia on this point with the republican governments of Greece. Still the Macedonians were clearly anything but slaves like the Asiatics; though political liberty may have had no settled being, there were certain barriers of civil liberty which the King could not venture to overpass. There was evidently something answering to trial by jury; Alexander, in the height of his conquests, did not venture to put a free Macedonian to death in the way of public justice, till he had been brought before the judgement of his peers. Again, the Asiatic pomp, both of Alexander himself and afterwards of Dêmêtrios, is expressly said to have offended a people who were used to very different treatment at the hands of their rulers. The mere existence of a Macedonian monarchy is in itself a remarkable phænomenon, as no other civilized European state, save the neighbouring land of Epeiros, so long kept on the ancient kingship. Macedonia, and Epeiros also, till a democratic revolution cut off the line of Pyrrhos, look like continuations, on a larger scale, of the old heroic monarchies which in Greece and Italy were done away with at a much earlier time.

We see then that, even in a political point of view, Macedonia is far from being an utterly barren subject, while, when looked at as a matter of ethnology, it is of the very highest interest. We will not however now enter on the question of the exact amount of national kindred between Greeks and Macedonians, a subject which involves the whole Pelasgian controversy, and which cannot be settled without a full exami-

these four states were, but their citizens may well have been puzzled how to supply the loss of the old familiar kingship. As for the Macedonian Assemblies in earlier times, we are of course not to suppose that they met as regularly as the Assemblies of Athens or Achaia, and they were doubtless far less orderly when they did meet. But it is plain that they were called together on occasion both for judicial and other purposes. Of course in such a state of society the army was the Assembly and the Assembly was the army, just as it was in the heroic days of Greece, the institutions of which went on in Macedonia after they had died away in Greece itself.]

* Phil. iii. 59, 60.

nation of all the ethnological phænomena of Greece, Italy, and Lesser Asia. We will at present only express our belief that the Macedonians were a branch of that great Pelasgian family—using the word in what we take to be Niebuhr's sense of it—which spread over all those countries.* That barbarian, especially Illyrian, elements were largely intermingled in the Macedonian nationality is perfectly clear; but it is to our mind no less clear that the predominant aspect of the Macedonian people is, like that of the Sikels, the Epeirots, even of the Lykians and Karians, one of a *quasi*-Greek character. Their language was not Greek; therefore in the Greek sense it was barbarous; but it was clearly akin to Greek,† in the same way as the different Teutonic tongues are akin to one another. The whole region which we have spoken of is clearly marked by the recurrence of similar local names in widely different districts, by a similar style of primæval architecture,‡ and by the singular ease with which all its inhabitants adopted the fully developed Hellenic language and civilization.

The only other Greek state of any note during the Macedonian period was Sparta. The later history of this once ruling city is highly important in a political point of view, and it is interesting, far beyond that of any contemporary state, in the pictures which it gives us of personal character and adventure. Macedonia, after Alexander, gives us, unless we may venture to put in a word for Dêmêtrios, no character which really calls forth our interest; Antigonos Dôsôn was certainly a good King, but we know comparatively little about him, and there is nothing specially attractive in what we do know. Even the chiefs of the League

* [The Pelasgians are better left untouched. But I fully believe in the close connexion of all these nations with the Greeks. The researches of Curtius and Hahn have made it probable that we must draw a wider circle again, and take in Thracians, Illyrians, and Phrygians, as more distant kinsmen.]

† See Müller's Dorians, i. 3, 486.

‡ [Since the preaching of Mr. Tylor's science, whatever it is to be called, this argument does not prove very much, but it is none the less curious to trace the various strivings after the arch both in Greece and in Italy.

are not men to awaken much enthusiasm on their behalf. The character of Aratos was always stained by many weaknesses, and towards the close of his life it assumed a deeper dye; of the gallant Lydiadas we know less than we could desire; even the brave, prudent, and honest Philopoimên is, after all, a hero of a somewhat dull order. But far different is the case when we have to tell how the gallant, unselfish, enthusiastic, Agis won the glory of the martyr in the noblest but most hopeless of causes, and how his mantle fell upon an abler, though a less pure, successor. Here, for once, we may turn with pleasure from the prejudiced narrative of Polybios to the picture given us by Plutarch of the happy union of kingly virtues with every amiable quality of domestic life. Nowhere either in Grecian or in any other history can we find a character more fitted to call forth our sympathies than the heroic wife of the two last Hêrakleids; nowhere are more touching scenes recorded than the martyrdom of Agêsistrata by the side of her slaughtered son, or the parting of Kleomenês from his mother in the temple of Poseidôn, parent and child alike ready to sacrifice all for the good of Sparta. There can be no doubt but that the designs of Kleomenês would have borne lasting fruit, but for the envious treason with which Aratos stained the glory of his earlier exploits. Agis perished because he undertook the hopeless task of restoring a state of things which had for ever passed away; Kleomenês, a keener and less scrupulous statesman, adapted himself to the circumstances of the time. The Dorian element was dying out in Sparta, just as the Norman and Frankish elements died out in England and France.* Sparta was again Achaian, as France again became Celtic, and England again became Teutonic. The only difference was that at Sparta formal barriers had to be got rid of, while in the other cases the silent working of time has been enough. Kleomenês, a Hêrakleid prince of the old Achaian blood, had no sympathy with Dorian oligarchs. He became

* [That is in 'Francia Latina' in the strict sense. South of the Loire there were no Frankish, though there may have been Gothic, elements to die out.]

the true leader of the people. He swept away, by his unscrupulous energy, distinctions which had outlived their purpose, and set up again the throne of Tyndareôs rather than the throne of Agêsilaos. That Aratos could not bear the glory of such a rival; that, rather than submit to a cordial and equal alliance with the Spartan King, he chose to undo his own work, and to hand over the Greece that he had freed to the grasp of a Macedonian ruler, is one of the most painful instances on record of the follies and crimes of otherwise illustrious men. Sparta and the League cordially allied,—an union closer than alliance they could hardly have made,—might have braved the power of Antigonos and Philip, and might perhaps have put off for some generations the fated absorption of all in the vast ocean of Roman conquest.

But time would fail us to tell of Laconian heroism and Achaian treason, of Roman diplomacy and Ætolian rashness. We must forbear to speak of the days when, at Kynoskephalê and Pydna, the shield and the sarissa which had borne the literature and civilization of Greece into the wilds of Scythia and the burning plains of Hindostan were themselves doomed to fall before the mightier onslaught of

> 'the good weapons
> That keep the war-God's land.'

We have yet to see the successor of Philip and Alexander toiling his weary way, as a dishonoured captive, along the bellowing forum and the suppliant's grove; we have yet to witness the last throes of Grecian freedom, disgraced as they were by the rashness and selfishness of a Diaios and a Kritolaos, but still calling on us to let fall a tear over the last day of plundered and burning Corinth. But we stop, however much against our will, throwing ourselves in full confidence upon the judgement of our readers, and looking for their favourable verdict in the cause which we have striven to maintain—that of the high interest and value of Grecian history in all its stages, even down to the latest and saddest days of all.

# VII.

## MOMMSEN'S HISTORY OF ROME.*

*Römische Geschichte*, von THEODOR MOMMSEN. Three volumes. Leipzig and Berlin, 1854–6.

THE history of Rome is the greatest of all historical subjects, for this simple reason, that the history of Rome is in truth the same as the history of the world. If history be read, not as a mere chronicle of events, recorded as a form and remembered as a lesson, but as the living science of causes and effects, it will be found that, if we would rightly understand the destiny of what is truly called the Eternal City, our researches must be carried up to the very beginnings of history and tradition, and must be carried on without break to the present hour. Palestine, Greece, Italy, are the three lands whose history contains the history of man. From Palestine we draw our religion, from Greece comes art and literature, and, in a manner, law and freedom. But the influence of Palestine and Greece is, to a large extent, an influence of mere example and analogy; even where it is a real influence of cause and effect, it is at best an indirect influence, an influence working through the tongues and the arms of strangers. The history of civilized man goes on in one unbroken tale from Thêseus to our own day;† but the drama

* [This article represents my first impressions, drawn mainly from its earlier parts, of what, with all its faults, is undoubtedly a great work. As an Appendix I have added a later notice, which was written when Mommsen's book was plainly beginning to have an effect in England, which it had not had time to have when the earlier article was written. Perhaps I was also myself only then beginning to shake off the spell with which we in our island are apt to be affected by 'the last German work' on any subject.]

† [I of course did not mean to pledge myself to the personal existence of Thêseus, but we may fairly take his name as representing the *ξυνοίκισις* of Attica. See above, p. 119.]

shifts its scenes and changes its actors; Greece can reach us only by way of Italy; the Athenian speaks to modern Europe almost wholly through a Roman interpreter. We profess a religion of Hebrew birth; but the oracles of that religion speak the tongue of Greece, and they reached us only through the agency of Rome. Among the old states of the world, the history of Carthage and of Palestine merges itself for ever in that of Rome. Greece, like one of her own underground rivers, merges herself also for a while; she shrouds herself under the guise and title of her conqueror, and at last she shows herself again at such a distance that some refuse to know her for herself. To understand Roman history aright, we must know the history of the Semitic and Hellenic races which Rome swallowed up, and the history of those races of the further East which Rome herself never could overcome. We must go yet further back: we must, by the aid of philological research, grope warily beyond the domain of history or legend. We must go back to unrecorded days, when Greek and Italian were one people; and to days more ancient still, when Greek, Italian, Celt, Teuton, Slave, Hindoo, and Persian, were as yet members of one undivided brotherhood. And, if the historian of Rome is bound to look back, still more is he bound to look onwards. He has but to cast his eye upon the world around him to see that Rome is still a living and abiding power. The tongue of Rome is the groundwork of the living speech of south-western Europe; it shares our own vocabulary with the tongue of our Teutonic fathers.* The tongue of Rome is still the ecclesiastical language of half Christendom; the days

* [I should hardly have written this sentence now, because, though literally true, it is misleading. In an English dictionary, even after striking out mere technical terms and mere pieces of vulgar affectation, there will most likely be as many Romance as Teutonic words. Many of these Romance words are thoroughly naturalized, and may now rank on a level with native English words. Still, even words of this class, which it needs philological knowledge to distinguish from real Teutonic words—*please*, *pay*, *money*, have nothing on the face of them to distinguish them from *tease*, *say*, *honey*—are a mere infusion, and not a co-ordinate element. We may make sentence after sentence out of Teutonic words only; we cannot make a single full sentence out of Romance words only.]

are hardly past when it was the common speech of science and learning. The Law of Rome is still quoted in our courts and taught in our Universities; in other lands it forms the source and groundwork of their whole jurisprudence. Little more than half a century has passed since an Emperor of the Romans, tracing his unbroken descent from Constantine and Augustus, still held his place among European sovereigns, and, as Emperor of the Romans, still claimed precedence over every meaner potentate. And the title of a Roman office, the surname of a Roman family, is still the highest object of human ambition, still clutched at alike by worn-out dynasties and by successful usurpers. Go eastward, and the whole diplomatic skill of Europe is taxed to settle the affairs of a Roman colony, which, cut off alike by time and distance, still clings to its Roman language and glories in its Roman name.* We made war but yesterday upon a power whose badge is the Roman eagle, on behalf of one whose capital has not yet lost the official title of New Rome. Look below the surface, and the Christian subjects of the Porte are found called and calling themselves Romans; go beyond the Tigris, and their master himself is known to the votary of Ali simply as the Roman Cæsar. Even facts like these, which hardly rise above the level of antiquarian curiosities, still bear witness to an abiding power such as no other city or kingdom ever knew. And, far above them all, in deep and vast significance, towers the yet living phænomenon of the Roman Church and the Roman Pontiff. The city of the Cæsars has for ages been, it still is, and, as far as man can judge, it will still for ages be, the religious centre, the holy place, the sacred hearth and home, of the faith and worship of millions on each side of the Atlantic. The successor of the Fisherman still in very truth sits on the throne of Nero, and wields the sceptre of Diocletian. It is indeed a throne rocked by storms; Gaul and German may do battle for its

* [The Rouman Principalities on the Danube were, when this was written, as indeed they have often been since, one of the standing difficulties of European politics.]

advocacy; they have done so in ages past, and they may do so for ages to come; but the power which has lived through the friendship and the enmity of Justinian and Liudprand, of Charles and Otto, of the Henries and the Fredericks, of Charles of Austria and Buonaparte of France, may well live to behold the extinction, however distant it may be, of both the rival lines of Corsica and Habsburg.* Look back to the first dim traditions of the European continent, and we look not too far back for the beginnings of Roman history. Ask for the last despatch and the last telegram, and it will tell us that the history of Rome has not yet reached its end. It is in Rome that all ancient history loses itself; it is out of Rome that all modern history takes its source. Her native laws and language, her foreign but naturalized creed, still form one of the foremost elements in the intellectual life of every European nation; and, in a large portion of the European continent, they not only form a foremost element, but are the very groundwork of all.

The history of Rome dies away so gradually into the general history of the middle ages, that it is hard to say at what point a special Roman history should end. Arnold proposed to carry on his History to the coronation of Charles the Great. Something may doubtless be said for this point, and something also for other points, both earlier and later.† The Roman history gradually changes from the history of a city

* [The Papacy has now seen the extinction, as Italian powers, of both the foreign oppressors of Italy. One has lost the power to do evil, the other has lost both the power and the will. The extinction of the temporal power of the Papacy itself has indeed followed, but any one who remembers the deathbed of Gregory the Seventh may doubt whether the real power of the spiritual Rome is not strengthened by its seeming loss.]

† [I now feel that Arnold was right, and that the coronation of Charles is the proper ending for a strictly Roman history. Before that point it is impossible to draw any line. The vulgar boundary of A.D. 476 would shut out Theodoric the Patrician and Belisarius the Consul. But when the Roman Empire practically becomes an appendage to a German kingdom, the old life of Rome is gone. The old memories still go on influencing history in a thousand ways, but the government of Charles was not Roman in the same sense as the government of Theodoric.]

into the history of an Empire. The history of the Republic is the history of a municipality which bore sway over an ever-increasing subject territory; it differed only in its scale from the earlier dominion of Athens and Carthage, from the later dominion of Bern and Venice. Under the Empire this municipal character died away; the Roman citizen and the provincial became alike the subjects of Cæsar; in process of time the rights, such as they then were, of the Roman citizen were extended to all the subjects of the Roman monarchy. During the middle ages the strange sight was seen of a Greek and a German disputing over the title of Roman Emperor, while Rome itself was foreign ground to both alike. But this was only the full developement of a state of things which had begun to arise, which indeed could not fail to arise, long before the period commonly given as the end of the true Roman Empire. The importance of the capital, even under the Emperors, was far greater than that of the capital of a modern state. But it was no longer what it had been under the Republic. When from the Ocean to the Euphrates all alike were Romans, the common sovereign of all ceased to be bound to Rome itself by the same tie as the old Consuls and Dictators. Rome gradually ceased to be an Imperial dwelling-place. The truth of the case is clouded over when we are told that Constantine translated the seat of Empire from Rome to Byzantion. What Constantine did was to fix at Byzantion a throne which had already left Rome, but which had as yet found no other lasting resting-place. The predecessors of Constantine had reigned at Milan and Nikomêdeia; his successors reigned at Ravenna and at what now had become Constantinople. Constantius and Honorius did but visit Rome now and then; they came more peacefully than the Ottos and Henries of a later age, but they came quite as truly as passing strangers. And when the seat of government—always for a large part, sometimes for the whole—of the Roman Empire was for ever transferred to Constantinople, it is wonderful to see how truly that city became, as it was called, the New Rome. Greece indeed in the end

won back her rights over the old Megarian city; the Byzantine Empire gradually changed from a Roman to a Greek state; but at what moment the change was fully wrought it is impossible to say. Up to the coronation of Charles, the Byzantine Emperor was at least nominal lord of the Old as well as of the New Rome. With Charles begin the various dynasties of German Cæsars, which kept up more of local connexion with Old Rome, but much less of the true Roman tradition, than their rivals at Byzantion. There is at least thus much to be said for the point chosen by Arnold, that, down to the coronation of Charles, there was still one Roman Empire and one undisputed Roman Emperor. Heraclius and Leo ruled Italy from Constantinople, as Diocletian had ruled it from Nikomêdeia. After the year 800 East and West are formally divided; there are two Roman Empires, two Roman Emperors. Of these, the one is fast tending to become definitively German, the other to become definitively Greek.

We know not to what point the author of the History before us means to carry on his work. As yet he has carried it up to the practical establishment of a practical monarchy under the first Cæsar. He shows how one Italian city contrived to conquer the whole Mediterranean world, and how unfit the municipal government of that city proved itself to be for the task of ruling the whole Mediterranean world. This is indeed a subject, and a very great subject, by itself; it is one of the greatest of political lessons; it is, in fact, the whole history of the City of Rome as the conquering and governing municipality; what follows is the history of the Empire, which took its name from the city, but which was gradually divorced from it. The point which Mommsen has now reached might almost be the end of a *Geschichte von Rom;* but his work calls itself a *Römische Geschichte*, and it may therefore be fairly carried to almost any point which the historian may choose.

The Roman History of Mommsen is, beyond all doubt, to be ranked among those really great historical works which do so

much honour to our own day. We can have little doubt as to calling it the best complete Roman History that we have. For a complete History, as we have just shown, we may call it, even as it now stands ; it is not a mere fragment, like the works of Niebuhr and Arnold. And even the ages with which Niebuhr and Arnold have dealt may be studied again with great advantage under Mommsen's guidance. And the important time between the end of Arnold's third volume and the opening of Dr. Merivale's History Mommsen has pretty well to himself among writers who have any claim to be looked on as his peers. In short, we have now, for the first time, the whole history of the Roman Republic really written in a way worthy of the greatness of the subject. Mommsen is a real historian ; his powers of research and judgement are of a high order ; he is skilful in the grasp of his whole subject, and vigorous and independent in his way of dealing with particular parts. At the same time, there are certain inherent disadvantages in the form and scale of the work. Mommsen's History, like Bishop Thirlwall's, is one of a series. Most readers of Bishop Thirlwall must have marked that the fact of writing for a series, and a popular series, threw certain trammels around him during the early part of his work, from which he gradually freed himself as he went on. Mommsen's work is the first of a series, the aim of which seems to be to popularize—we do not use the word as one of depreciation—the study of classical antiquity among the general German public.* Such a purpose does not allow of much citation of authorities, or of much minute discussion of controverted points. The writer everywhere speaks as a master to an audience whose business it is to accept and not to dispute his teaching. But this mode of writing has its disadvantages, when it is applied by a bold and independent writer like Mommsen to a period of the peculiar character which belongs to the early history of Rome. That history, we need not say,

* 'Es wird damit eine Reihe von Handbüchern eröffnet, deren Zweck ist, das lebendigere Verständniss des classichen Alterthums in weitere Kreise zu bringen.'

is one which does not rest on contemporary authority. That Rome was taken by the Gauls seems to be the one event in the annals of several centuries which we can be absolutely sure was recorded by a writer who lived at the time.* Yet of these ages Dionysios and Livy give us a history as detailed as Thucydides can give of the Peloponnesian War or Eginhard of the campaigns of Charles the Great. Till the time of Niebuhr, all save a solitary sceptic here and there were ready to give to the first decade of Livy as full a belief as they could have given to Thucydides or Eginhard. And the few sceptics that there were commonly carried their unbelief to so unreasonable a length as rather to favour the cause of a still more unreasonable credulity. Till Arnold wrote, Hooke's was the standard English History of Rome; and Hooke no more thought of doubting the existence of Romulus than he thought of doubting the existence of Cæsar. Then came the wonderful work of Niebuhr, which overthrew one creed and set up another. The tale which our fathers had believed on the authority of Livy sank to the level of a myth, the invention of a poet, the exaggeration of a family panegyrist; but in its stead we were, in our own youth, called upon to accept another tale, told with almost equal minuteness, on the personal authority of a German doctor who had only just passed away from among men. Niebuhr's theory in fact acted like a spell; it was not to argument or evidence that it appealed; his followers avowedly claimed for him a kind of power of 'divination.' Since that time there has been, both in Germany and in England, a reaction against Niebuhr's authority. The insurrection has taken different forms: one party seem to have quietly fallen back into the unreasoning faith of our fathers.† Others are content to adopt Niebuhr's general mode of

* See the latter part of the twelfth chapter of Sir G. C. Lewis's Credibility of Early Roman History. It seems clear that Greek contemporary writers did record the Gaulish invasion; possibly the account of Polybios may fairly represent their version of the event.

† Sir George Lewis quotes, as taking this line, 'Die Geschichte der Römer, von F. D. Gerlach und J. J. Bachofen,' of which we can boast of no further knowledge. [The same line has since been taken up in England by Dr. Dyer.]

inquiry, and merely to reverse his judgement on particular points. This is the case with the able but as yet fragmentary work of Dr. Ihne.* Lastly, there comes the party of absolute unbelief, whose champion is no less a person than the late Chancellor of the Exchequer.† Beneath the Thor's hammer of Sir George Cornewall Lewis the edifice of Titus Livius and the edifice of Barthold Niebuhr fall to the ground side by side. Myths may be very pretty, divinations may be very ingenious, but the Right Honourable member for the Radnor boroughs will stand nothing but evidence which would be enough to hang a man. Almost every child has wept over the tale of Virginia, if not in Livy, at least in Goldsmith. Niebuhr and Arnold connect the tragic story with deep historical and political lessons; but Sir George Lewis coldly asks, 'Who saw her die?' and as nobody is ready to make the same answer as the fly in the nursery legend,—as Virginius and Icilius did not write the story down on a parchment roll, or carve it on a table of brass,—he will have nothing to say to any of them. 'That the basis' of the decemviral story 'is real, need not be doubted.'‡ But that is all; how much is real basis, how much is imaginary superstructure, Sir George Lewis cannot undertake to settle.

To that large body of English scholars who have been brought up at the feet of Niebuhr, but who have since learned in some measure to throw aside his authority, there will be found something unsatisfactory, or perhaps more truly something disappointing, in Mommsen's way of dealing with the

* Researches into the History of the Roman Constitution. By W. Ihne Ph. D. London, 1853. [Dr. Ihne's complete History has since appeared both in German and English.]

† [It will be remembered that this was written during the life-time of Sir George Lewis. I still believe that that great scholar went too far in his unbelief, owing to his looking too exclusively to mere documentary evidence and passing by equally important evidence of other kinds. Nothing can be more thorough than Sir George Lewis's overthrow of many of Niebuhr's particular notions. But I still believe that Niebuhr's general method, if it were only more judiciously carried out, is the right one. Mr. Tylor's new science would be our best guide to many of the facts in early Roman History.]

‡ Credibility of Early Roman History, vol. ii. p. 292.

Kings and the early Republic. The spell of Niebuhr's fascination is one which is not easily broken: it is, in fact, much more than a spell; the faith with which we looked up to him in our youth was exaggerated, but it was not wholly misplaced. Sir George Lewis has, beyond all doubt, done a lasting service to historical truth by convicting Niebuhr of a vast amount of error in detail—of inaccuracies, inconsistencies, hasty inductions, instances of arrogant dogmatism; but we cannot think that he has shown Niebuhr's general system to be a wrong one. Niebuhr's method, at once destructive and constructive, is surely essentially sound. His doctrine that the current statement, probably far removed from the literal truth, still contains a basis of truth, Sir George Lewis himself does not venture wholly to deny. That a process, not indeed of 'divination,' but of laborious examination and sober reflexion, may in many cases distinguish the truth from the falsehood, does not seem in itself unreasonable. Our own belief is that Niebuhr's arrogant and self-sufficient dogmatism did but damage a cause which was essentially sound. Sir George Lewis, while successfully demolishing the outworks, has made, in our judgement, no impression upon Niebuhr's main fortress. In such a state of mind, we cannot help looking at every page of the early Roman history as essentially matter of controversy; every step must be taken warily; no assertion must either be lightly accepted or lightly rejected, and no decision must be come to without weighing the arguments on one side and on the other. It is therefore somewhat disappointing, not to say provoking, when in Mommsen's History of this period we find difficulties passed over without a word, when we find statements made, which sometimes command our assent, which sometimes arouse our incredulity, but of which, in either case, we never heard before, and which make us eager to know Mommsen's grounds for adopting them. It is easy to see that Mommsen is quite capable of holding his own ground against either Niebuhr or Sir George Lewis. We feel sure that he has gone carefully through every point of controversy in his own mind; we only wish that we ourselves might be

admitted to witness the process as well as the result. We in no way blame Mommsen for a defect which springs at once from the scale and nature of his work. To have treated the whole subject controversially, to have examined every statement at length and cited every authority in full, would have swelled the book to an extent which would have been quite unfitted for the classes of readers for which it was in the first instance meant. But the lack of reasons and references makes this part of the book less valuable to the professed scholar than either that which goes before or that which follows it. Mommsen shines most in one part in which he himself exercises a 'divination' as ingenious and more sound than that of Niebuhr, and in another part in which the whole business of the historian is to narrate and to comment upon facts whose general truth has never been called in question. The two subjects in dealing with which Mommsen has been most successful are the præ-historic age of the Italian nations, and the steps, military and diplomatic, by which a single city of one of them rose to universal empire. It is greatly to his credit that he should have achieved such striking success in two subjects which call for such different modes of treatment.

The præ-historic chapters of Mommsen's book form one of the best applications that we have ever seen of the growing science of Comparative Philology.* They show how much we may learn, from evidence which cannot deceive, of the history of nations for ages before a single event was set down in writing. We are thus enabled to go back to days earlier even than those which are, in a manner, chronicled by poetry and tradition. In the Homeric poems we have our first written record of the Greek people.† But Comparative

* [It must be remembered here, as in some other parts of these Essays, that Comparative Philology was only just beginning to make its way in England when they were written. I have struck out a good deal which was new when I wrote it, but which has now become a thrice-told tale.]

† [I have here again cut short my argument as being practically the same as what I have said in my Essay on Mr. Gladstone's book. See above p. 58.]

Philology goes far beyond the tale of Troy, far beyond the settlement of the Hellênes in the land of the many islands and of all Argos. And its evidence is the surest evidence of all, evidence thoroughly unconscious. Comparative Philology and præ-historic archæology do for man what geology does for his dwelling-place. Their mode of inquiry is the same. There may be indeed minds to which it would fail to carry conviction. The phænomena of human language and the phænomena of the earth's strata may be alleged to be the result of accident. Different strata may not really represent different periods; the whole may be the work of one act of creation, on which the Creator may have impressed such appearances from its birth. So the likeness between Greek, Teutonic, and Sanscrit may be said to be no likeness at all; it may be said to be an accident; it may be said to prove, if anything, only the confusion of tongues at Babel. Certainly neither geology nor Comparative Philology can bring strict mathematical proof to bear upon the mind of a determined objector. Possibly indeed they might retort that geometry itself has its postulates. When the geologist or the philologer demands a certain amount of blind submission, he hardly does more than Euclid himself does, when he assumes, without proving, certain positions about parallels and angles which, though undoubtedly true, are certainly not self-evident. Geology has made its way; it has become popular; hardly any one seriously disputes its conclusions. Comparative Philology is still struggling; and its attendant, Comparative Mythology, is only just beginning to be heard of. The fact is, that to the uneducated mind the first principles of etymology are a great mystery. The real likenesses of words need a certain education to make them familiar; people catch at purely accidental likenesses, and fail to grasp those which are essential. We have no doubt that many of those who learn both French and German believe French to be the language more nearly akin to English. Comparative Philology only asks for a little faith at the beginning: the believer soon begins to see with his own eyes, and he shortly makes discoveries of his own, which he in turn

finds the outer world slow to put any faith in. And we are not sure that perverted ingenuity does not sometimes do even more harm than unbelieving ignorance. We once came across a book, whose name we have forgotten, which undertook to prove the kindred between the early inhabitants of Gaul and Britain by the likeness between the modern Bret-Welsh and French languages. Now it would be hard to find any two descendants of the original Aryan stock which have less to do with one another than the speech of the modern Cymrian and the speech of the modern Frenchman. But a few traces of primitive kindred may still be seen. And, while Latin of course forms the whole groundwork of French, a few Latin words have, naturally enough, strayed into Welsh. Between these two classes our writer gathered together a rather large stock of Welsh words which are very like the words which translate them in French. *Ceft* was undoubtedly akin to *cheval*; *eglwys* was still more clearly akin to *église*. Whether our philologer got so far as to see that *gosper* and *vêpres* were also akin, we do not remember. But, at any rate, his collections quite satisfied him that the Celt of Gaul and the Celt of Britain were closely akin; a proposition which nothing could lead any one to doubt except the fact that it had been supported by such a wonderful argument.

We need hardly say that the Comparative Philology of Mommsen is not exactly of the same kind as that of our Celtic searcher after truth. Starting from the doctrine of the common origin of the Aryan nations, a comparison of their several languages, and of the amount of cultivation which language shows each branch to have reached before it finally parted asunder, enables him to put together something like a map of their wanderings, by which he gradually comes down to his own theme of the history of Italy. After the Asiatic Aryans had parted off to the East, the European Aryans still formed a single people. A step further still shows that the Italians and the Hellênes remained one people after Celt and Teuton and Slave had parted from them, and that they had made considerable advances in cultivation before they again

parted asunder, each to occupy its own peninsula, and to meet again in each, through colonization and conquest, in after times.

With regard to the earliest inhabitants of Italy Mommsen's general conclusions are these: Ancient Italy contained three distinct races—first, the Iapygians in the south; secondly, those whom Mommsen distinctively calls 'Italians' in the middle; thirdly, the Etruscans in the north and north-west. Their geographical position would seem to show that this was the order in which the three nations entered the peninsula. Of the Iapygians we know but little; history shows them to us only in a decaying state, and all that we know of their language comes from certain inscriptions which are as yet uninterpreted. This evidence however tends to show that their language was Aryan, distinct from the Italian,* and possessing certain affinities with the Greek. With this also falls in the fact that in historic times they adopted Greek civilization with unusual ease. The Italians of Mommsen's nomenclature are the historical inhabitants of the greater portion of the peninsula. This is the nation the history of whose tongue and government becomes one with the history of civilized man; for of their language the most finished type is the Latin, and of their cities the greatest was Rome. The Etruscans Mommsen holds to be wholly alien from the Italian nations; their language is most likely Aryan, but that is all that can be said. He rejects the story of their Lydian origin, and seems inclined to look upon Rætia as the cradle of their race.† He makes two periods of the Etruscan language, of which the former one is to be found in those inscriptions on vases at Cære or Agylla, which Mr. Francis Newman ‡

* We are here merely setting forth Mommsen's views, without binding ourselves either to accept or to refute them. We think however that he should at least have noticed the seeming identity of the names *Iapyges, Apuli, Opici*, which, so far as it goes, tells against him.

† [The latest results of præhistoric research—in this case quite as important as any documentary evidence—on Etruscan matters will be found in the article on the 'Present Phase of Præhistoric Archæology,' in the British Quarterly Review for October, 1870, p. 470 et seqq.]

‡ Regal Rome, p. 7. It is certainly hard to see how this sort of language can, as Mommsen supposes, have developed into the later Etruscan.

quotes as Pelasgian. Into the endless Pelasgian controversy Mommsen hardly enters at all. For that controversy turns almost wholly on points of legend or tradition, hardly at all on Comparative Philology. On the other hand, he passes by in yet more utter silence some theories the evidence for which is wholly of a philological kind. We mean the theory supported by Mr. Newman and others,* which sees a Celtic, and specially a Gaelic, element in the old Italian population, and that which supposes a race of Basque or Iberian aborigines to have occupied Italy before the entrance of its historical inhabitants.†

The Italians, in Mommsen's special sense, were then a people closely allied to the Hellênes, and they had made no small advances in cultivation before the two stocks parted asunder. The Italian stock again divides itself into two, the Latin and the Umbro-Samnite, the difference between which he compares to that between Ionic and Doric Greek. The Umbro-Samnite branch again divides itself into the Oscan and the Umbrian, analogous, according to our author, to the Doric of Sicily and the Doric of Sparta. Rome is a city purely Latin, and the head of Latium. The Tiber was at once the boundary of Latium against the Etruscan stranger, and the natural highway for the primitive commerce of the early Latins. The site of Rome thus marks it out as at once the commercial capital of Latium and the great bulwark of the land against the Etruscan. Such was the earliest mission of Rome. It may have been merely by a happy accident that one of the Latin cities was placed on a site which enabled it to take such a mission on itself; it may have been founded expressly to discharge it, either by the common will of the Latin confederacy, or by the wisdom of some clear-sighted founder of unrecorded times. Rome may have

* Regal Rome, pp. 17 et seqq.

† [The Basque occupation of Italy, and of large regions besides Italy, seems to have all probability in its favour; but I suspect that Mr. Newman's Gaelic element proves nothing more than the original Aryan kindred of Latin and Celtic.]

been either the eldest or the youngest of Latin cities. But the chances seem greatly in favour of her being rather the child than the parent of the League. All tradition calls Rome an Alban, that is a Latin, colony. As soon as we get anything like a glimpse of real history, we find Rome essentially a Latin city, we find her unmistakeably the chief among the cities of Latium. But Rome is not only far greater than any other Latin city; she appears as something in a manner outside the League; we find her in the very position, in short, which was likely to be taken by a younger city which had outstripped its elders. She is a Latin city, she is closely bound to the other Latin cities; but she is hardly an integral member of their confederacy; in the times of her greatest recorded weakness she treats with the League as an equal; the single city of Rome is placed on an equal footing with the whole body of the other thirty. And, through the advantage which a single powerful state always has over a confederacy of smaller states, the equal alliance between Rome and Latium grew into a practical supremacy of Rome over Latium. Rome clearly held this power under her Kings, and, if she lost it by her revolution, she gained it again by the League of Spurius Cassius. Rome and Latium were in form equal allies; the Hernicans were united in the League on the same terms; but it is impossible to doubt that Rome was the soul of the confederacy during the whole time that it lasted. The Æquian and Volscian invasions again fell far more heavily upon the Latin allies than upon Rome herself. Many Latin cities were wholly lost, others were greatly weakened. All this would of course greatly increase the proportionate importance of Rome; the Latins would be led to look more and more to Rome as the natural head of their nation, and to seek, not for independence, but for union on closer and juster terms. The demands of the Latin allies at the outbreak of the great Latin War are the best comment on the relations between Rome and Latium. Their feeling towards Rome was clearly that of excluded citizens under an oligarchy, rather than that of an oppressed nation under

a foreign government. They do not ask to shake off the Roman yoke or to forsake the Roman alliance; what they ask is to become wholly Roman themselves. They are ready to wipe out the Latin name and the separate being of the Latin League. Their demands are almost the same as the demands of the plebeians in Rome itself hardly a generation earlier. As the Licinian laws ordained that one Consul should be a plebeian, the Latins now asked that one Consul should be a Latin. The Senate was to be half Latin; the Latin cities would probably have been reckoned each one as a Roman tribe. Terms like these Rome held it beneath her dignity to grant; but, after the conquest of Latium, the mass of the Latin nation did gradually gain Roman citizenship in one way or another. This is, in short, the constantly repeated history of Rome and her allies, from the earliest to the latest period. Men seek to get rid of their bondage to Rome, but they do not seek to get rid of it by setting up wholly for themselves; what they seek is to become Romans, and, as Romans, to help to rule both themselves and others. The first recorded struggle, that between patrician and plebeian, was in its beginning much more truly a struggle between distinct nations than a struggle between different orders in the same nation. But the demand of the plebeians was, not to overthrow the patrician government, but to win a share in it for themselves. It was only in some desperate moment, when every demand was refused, that they resorted to the extreme measure of a 'secession'; that is, they threatened to leave Rome, and to found a new city for themselves. On the struggle between patrician and plebeian followed the struggle between Roman and Latin; but the Latin was driven into a war against Rome only when he could not obtain his desire of incorporation with Rome. The Samnite wars, and the wars with the Etruscan, Gaulish, and Epeirot allies of Samnium, brought the whole of Italy into the state of dependent alliance with Rome. Italy was now latinized step by step; but at the same time the yoke of Rome was found to be no light one. Still no signs are seen of any wish to throw it off, except in such strange exceptional cases as the

solitary revolts of Falerii and Fregellæ. The Italians gradually put on the feelings of Romans; like the plebeians, like the Latins, they sought not independence, but full incorporation. The claims of the Italian Allies formed the most important political question of the seventh century of the city. The rights of the Italians, admitted by the best men both of the senatorial and of the democratic party, were opposed to the vulgar prejudices of Senate and People alike. When each party alike had failed them, then the Allies took arms, not for Samnite or Marsian independence, but for a New Rome of their own, a premature republican Constantinople, the city Italy. This New Rome, like the Old, had its Senate, its Consuls, its Prætors, its citizenship shared by every member of the allied commonwealths. Like the Latins of the fifth century, the Italians of the seventh were at last admitted piecemeal to the rights for which they strove. Every Italian was now a Roman; save where Hellenic influence had taken lasting root, all Italy was now latinized. But by this time vast regions out of Italy had begun to be latinized also. Latin civilization spread over Spain, Gaul, and Africa; the policy of the Emperors tended to break down the distinction between citizen and provincial, and at last the franchise of the Roman city was extended to all the subjects of the Roman Empire. Western Europe became thoroughly romanized; even the Greek and his eastern proselytes became Roman in political feeling, and learned to glory in that Roman name to which some of them still cleave. In Syria and Egypt alone did the old national feelings abide. Elsewhere, save some wild tribe here and there, the Mediterranean world was wholly Roman. Its unity was constantly rent by civil wars, by the claims of rival Emperors, by peaceful division between Imperial colleagues. But from the Ocean to Mount Taurus no Roman citizen thought of laying aside his Roman character. Emperors reigned in Gaul and Britain; but they were not Gaulish or British sovereigns; they were still Roman Cæsars, holding a part of the Roman Empire, and striving after the possession of the whole. During the whole history of Rome,

both Old and New, from the first mythical King to the last phantom Emperor, it would be hard to find a city or a province which, when it had been once thoroughly welded into the Roman system, willingly threw aside its Roman allegiance. Provinces might helplessly submit to foreign conquerors, but they never asserted their own national independence.* Till Monophysite Egypt welcomed a deliverer in the Mussulman Arab, it does not appear that barbarian invaders ever met with actual help from the provincials anywhere within the Roman territory. Italy indeed, in the seventh century of our æra, revolted against the Eastern Emperor and gave herself of her own free will to a Frankish master. But her Frankish master himself came as a Roman Patrician, a Roman Cæsar, to assert the rights of the Old Rome against the usurpation of the New. Through the whole of this long series of centuries, all who come in contact with the original Romulean city,—the plebeian, the Latin, the Italian, at last the inhabitants of the whole Mediterranean world,—all, one by one, obtained the Roman name; and none of them willingly forsook it.

The workings of a law which went on in full force for above two thousand years have carried us far away from Mommsen's immediate subject. And yet we have perhaps not spoken of the earliest instance of its working. Rome, as we have said, is in Mommsen's view strictly a Latin city. He casts aside with scorn the notion of the Romans being a mongrel race, *ein Mischvolk*, an union of elements from the three great races of Italy. Of the three old patrician tribes, the Titienses were indeed most likely of Sabine origin; but they were Sabines who had been thoroughly latinized, who at most, as other incorporated nations did in later times, brought some Sabine rites into the Roman religion. The really Latin

* Whether the so-called revolt of Britain and Armorica in the fifth century is to be reckoned as a solitary exception depends on two very difficult questions: First, How far had Britain and Armorica really become Roman? Secondly, What is the meaning of the not very intelligible narrative in the last book of Zôsimos?

character of Rome was no more touched by them than when, under the early Republic, the Sabine Attus Clausus, with his clan and following, were changed into the Claudian *gens* and tribe. Here then in days totally unrecorded, before the struggles of Latin or of plebeian, we find the first instance of that inherent power of assimilation or incorporation on the part of the Roman commonwealth, which went on alike under Kings, Consuls, and Cæsars. The legend of Romulus is, in Mommsen's view, a comparatively late one, as is shown by the name of the eponymous hero being formed from the later form of the name of the city and people. The oldest form is not *Romani*, but *Ramnes*, that of the first patrician tribe; and that form points to the name of the Eternal City as having had in the first days the same meaning as our own Woottons and Bushburies.*

The other strong point of Mommsen, besides his treatment of the primæval archæology, is his treatment of what we may call the diplomatic history of Rome. In Rome's gradual march to universal empire two great stages are marked, the complete subjugation of Italy, and the conquest of Macedonia at the battle of Pydna. Mommsen wholly throws aside the notion that the Roman Senate and People acted through successive centuries on any deliberate and systematic scheme of universal dominion. War and conquest were undoubtedly as agreeable to them as they have commonly been to most other nations; but their distant conquests were in some cases almost forced upon them, and they often drifted into foreign wars as much through the result of circumstances as from any deliberate intent. It certainly seems to have been so throughout the time of Rome's greatest glory. Rome was at the true height of her greatness, within and without, in the fifth and sixth centuries of her history. The days of her early civil strife were over, the days of her later civil strife had not yet

* 'So dass der Name *Roma* oder *Rama* vielleicht ursprünglich die Wald- oder Buschstadt bezeichnet.'

come. The old political struggle between patrician and plebeian had become a thing of the past, and the far more fearful struggle between rich and poor was still a thing of the future. The Romans of those ages not only knew how to win victories, they had learned the far harder lesson how to bear defeat. The victories of Pyrrhos and Hannibal would have broken the spirit of almost every other nation of any age. But the endurance of Rome was never shaken; she could dare to proclaim publicly in her forum, 'We have been overcome in a great battle,' and her Senators could go forth to thank the defeated demagogue* who had not despaired of the Republic. Her political constitution may seem an anomaly; the sovereign Senate side by side with the no less sovereign popular Assembly, the Consul all-powerful to act, the Tribune all-powerful to forbid, may seem inconsistent, impracticable, unable to be worked. But the proof of the Roman system is seen in two centuries stained by nothing worthy to be called civil strife; it is seen in the conquest of Italy, in the driving back of Pyrrhos and of Hannibal, in tributary Carthage and tributary Macedonia. What the Roman system in these ages really was is shown by the men whom it brought forth; men always great enough, and never too great; men ready to serve their country, but never dreaming of enslaving it. What the true Roman national being was is shown to us in the hereditary virtues of the Decii and the Fabii, in the long-descended Scipio and in the lowly-born Curius and Regulus; we see it allied with Grecian culture in Titus Quinctius Flamininus and standing forth in old Italian simplicity in Marcus Porcius Cato. Rome in these ages bore her full crop of statesmen and soldiers, magistrates and orators, ready to be the rulers of one year and the subjects of the next. But as yet she brought forth neither a traitor nor a tyrant, nor, in any but the older and nobler sense, a demagogue. To this splendid period Mommsen is far from doing full justice; he understands, but he

* Mommsen seems to us unduly harsh on M. Terentius Varro, as well as on C. Flaminius. Arnold does them far more justice.

does not always feel; his narrative constantly seems cold and tame after that of Arnold. We miss the brilliant picture of the great men of the fifth century;* we miss the awful vision of Hannibal;† we miss the pictures of Gracchus and his enfranchised slaves and of Nero's march to the 'fateful stream' of the Metaurus. Both tell us how the old Marcellus died by a snare which a youth might have avoided; but in how different a strain! Mommsen gives us indeed the facts with all truth and clearness:

'Bei einer unbedeutenden Recognoscirung wurden beide Consuln von einer Abtheilung africanischer Reiter überfallen; Marcellus, schon ein Sechziger, fochte tapfer den ungleichen Kampf, bis er sterbend vom Pferde sank; Crispinus entkam, starb aber an den im Gefecht empfangenden Wunden.'‡

Turn we now to Arnold:

'Crispinus and the young Marcellus rode in covered with blood and followed by the scattered survivors of the party; but Marcellus, six times consul, the bravest and stoutest of soldiers, who had dedicated the spoils of the Gaulish king, slain by his own hand, to Jupiter Feretrius in the Capitol, was lying dead on a nameless hill; and his arms and body were Hannibal's.'§

The policy of Rome during these two glorious ages had, according to Mommsen, for its primary object, first to win, and then to hold, a firm dominion in Italy. Its dealings with the provinces and with foreign states were simply means to secure this primary end. Italy was won; its various states were brought to the condition of dependent allies. This condition deprived them of all practical sovereignty, and made them in all their external relations the passive subjects of Rome. But they kept their own local governments; they served Rome with men, not with money; and Rome's constant wars gave their individual citizens many chances of winning both wealth and honour. Doubtless, as they had constantly more and more to do with distant nations, they began to feel a wider Italian patriotism, and to glory in the triumphs which they had helped to win for the greatest of Italian cities. This feeling on the one hand, and on the other

* Arnold, ii. 272.
† Ibid, iii. 70.
‡ Mommsen, i. 464.
§ Arnold, iii. 354.

hand the occasional excesses of Roman officers in more degenerate times, combined to bring about that yearning after full Roman citizenship which we have so often spoken of already. The old Latin League was no longer in being; some of its states had vanished from the earth, others had been incorporated with Rome. But its place was in a manner filled by those Latin colonies, those children of Rome, on which, for some not very apparent reason, the Latin, and not the full Roman, franchise was bestowed. These were, in fact, Roman garrisons, scattered over the peninsula, serving to watch over the allied states, and to keep them in due dependence. Such was the state of things from the Rubico to the Strait of Messina. But for the full and safe possession of Italy something more was needed. Italy had no natural frontier nearer than the Alps; Cisalpine Gaul was therefore to be conquered. And, looking beyond the Hadriatic and the Libyan Sea, Rome had to settle her relations with the Carthaginian republic and the Macedonian kingdom. The balance of power was in those days an idea altogether unknown. To a modern statesman, could he have been carried into the third century before Christ, the great problem would have been to keep up such a balance between Rome, Carthage, and Macedonia. No rational English, French, or Russian diplomatist wishes to make any one of the other countries subject or tributary to his own; his object is not positively to weaken the rival state, but merely to keep down any undue encroachment.* But, from a Roman point of view, for Rome to be strong it was needful that Carthage and Macedonia should be positively weak. It may perhaps be doubted whether the modern system does not bring about just as many material evils as the other; but the two theories are quite different. A war between Rome and Carthage could end only in the overthrow, or at least the deep humiliation, of one or other of the contending powers. But let France and

* [We had not then heard the thoroughly Roman doctrine that France could not be safe unless Germany and Italy were divided, and that, because Prussia had made conquests—not at the expense of France—therefore France must needs get a 'compensation' for the losses of other people.]

Austria go to war to-morrow, and the result will not be that either Paris or Vienna will cease to be the capital of a powerful and independent state;* those who pay the price will be the unhappy scapegoats of Lombardy or Wallachia.† But, in the view of a Roman statesman, Italy could not be strong save at the direct cost of Carthage and Macedonia. A first war with Rome, like a modern war, led at most only to a payment in money or to the loss of some distant dependency; but a second led to the loss of political independence; a third led to utter overthrow. Thus the first Punic War cost Carthage Sicily and Sardinia, the second made Carthage a dependent state, the third swept her away from the face of the earth. The results of the first Macedonian War were almost wholly diplomatic; the second brought Macedonia down to the dependent relation; the third swept away the kingdom and cut it up into four separate commonwealths; the fourth, if it deserves the name, made Macedonia a Roman province. The difference in the processes of the two conquests is a good commentary on Mommsen's theory. The problem was for Rome to preserve a direct and unshaken dominion over Italy; everything beyond that was only means to an end. But Sicily and Sardinia were natural appendages of Italy; their possession by a state of equal rank might be directly dangerous. Rome therefore called on Carthage to give them up, Sicily by the terms of peace with Carthage, Sardinia as the price of its continuance a few years after. Their possession was almost as necessary as the possession of Cisalpine Gaul. But Macedonia had no such threatening colonies. The first treaty with Philip was concluded nearly on equal

* [This was written shortly before the famous time when France made war 'on behalf of an idea,' and ended by betraying Verona and Venice to Austria. I was therefore by no means a false prophet. But it is worth marking how in those days the rivalry seemed still to lie between France and Austria, not between France and either Prussia or Germany as a whole.]

† [Lombardy is now safe; Wallachia and Moldavia I cannot but think would be better off under the rule of Hungary—perhaps even as Hungary now stands; certainly when Austria is reunited to Germany, and when Hungary stands forth in her proper place as the central state of south-eastern Christendom.]

terms; the Macedonian frontier was simply 'rectified' by the loss of some points and the addition of others. Macedonia too had to pass through a more gradual descent than Carthage. Even the third war, the war of Pydna, did not involve destruction, or even formal incorporation with the Roman dominion; for Macedonia had sent no Hannibal to Cannæ, and her total humiliation was not so clearly an Italian necessity as the humiliation of Carthage.

The original Roman system then was to maintain direct rule in Italy; to endure no equal power, but to weaken all neighbouring states, to reduce them to what Mommsen calls the condition of clientage. But it is evident that this system could not fail to lead Rome more and more into the whirlpool of distant conquest. It is just like our own dominion in India, where we have our immediate provinces and our client princes answering exactly to those of Rome. In either case, when intermeddling has once begun, there is no way to stop it. Policy, or even sheer self-defence, leads to one conquest; that conquest leads to another; till at last annexation is loved for its own sake, the independent state becomes a dependency, and the dependency becomes a province. The Roman policy of surrounding Italy with a circle of weak states did not answer; it laid her open all the sooner to the necessity of a struggle with the powerful states which still remained behind. Macedonia was made, first a dependency and then a province; this only made it needful as the next stage to do the like by Syria. The like was done Syria; that only made it needful to try to do the like by Parthia, with which the like could not be done. In this last particular case, Mommsen shows very clearly that the result of the Roman policy was hurtful alike to the immediate interests of Rome and to the general interests of the world. The monarchy of the Seleukids, the truest heirs of Alexander's empire, whatever else it was, was at least, then and there, champion of European cultivation. It was the bulwark of the West against the East, the follower of Miltiadês and Agêsilaos, the forerunner of Leo the Isaurian and Don John of Austria. Now the policy of Rome brought the

Syrian monarchy to precisely that point in which the King of Antioch could no longer defend his own eastern borders, and in which it was not as yet either the clear duty or the clear interest of Rome to defend them for him. The effect of this is pointed out by Mommsen in a brilliant passage, which shows how well he understands the relation of his own immediate subject to the general history of the world.

'Diese Umwandlung der Völkerverhältnisse im inneren Asien ist der Wendepunct in der Geschichte des Alterthums. Statt der Völkerfluth, die bisher von Westen nach Osten sich ergossen und in dem grossen Alexander ihren letzten und höchsten Ausdruck gefunden hatte, beginnt die Ebbe. Seit der Partherstaat besteht, ist nicht bloss verloren, was in Baktrien und am Indus etwa noch von hellenischen Elementen sich erhalten haben möchte, sondern auch das westliche Iran weicht wieder zurück in das seit Jahrhunderten verlassene, aber noch nicht verwischte Geleise. Der römische Senat opfert das erste wesentliche Ergebniss der Politik Alexanders und leitet damit jene rückläufige Bewegung ein, deren letzten Ausläufer im Alhambra von Granada and in der grossen Moschee von Constantinopel endigen. So lange noch das Land von Ragae und Persepolis bis zum Mittelmeer dem König von Antiocheia gehorchte, erstreckte auch Roms Macht sich bis an die Grenze der grossen Wüste; der Partherstaat, nicht weil er so gar mächtig war, sondern weil er fern von der Küste, im inneren Asien seinen Schwerpunct land, konnte niemals eintreten in die Clientel des Mittelmeerreiches. Seit Alexander hatte die Welt den Occidentalen allein gehört und der Orient shien für diese nur zu sein was später Amerika und Australien für die Europäer wurden; mit Mithradates trat er wieder ein in den Kreis der politischen Bewegung. Die Welt hatte wieder zwei Herren.'*

But mixed up with much of the policy of Rome's Eastern dealings there was undoubtedly a large amount of what would nowadays be called philhellenic feeling. That the Roman Senate, as Bishop Thirlwall says, surpassed all recorded governments in diplomatic skill, we can readily admit; and yet we need not attribute all their doings to some unfathomably subtle line of policy. To hold that Rome acted, through a long series of years, on a deliberate plan of gradual conquest—

* Vol. ii. p. 59. We are not quite sure however that Mommsen has not too closely identified the Parthian dominion with the native Persian race and religion. The rise of Parthia was, as he describes it, a great reaction of the East against the West. But the Parthians seem to have been not quite beyond the influence either of Greek cultivation or of Christianity. The final blow was struck when a really national Persian state arose again in the third century A.D.

that she systematically made use of her allies, and cast them off when they were done with—that she formed a league with a state with the settled purpose of reducing it to a dependency in the next generation, and to a province in the generation after that,—to think all this is really to clothe what is after all an abstraction with rather too much of the attributes of a living and breathing man. The characteristics both of the Roman nation and of particular Roman families have so strong a tendency to pass on from father to son that Rome does seem clothed with something more like a personal being than almost any other state. Venice and Bern are the two nearest parallels in later times. But the policy even of Rome or Venice still, after all, means the policy of the men who at any given time took the lead in the Roman or Venetian commonwealth. Even in those grave Senates everything was not so much matter of precedent and tradition that no fluctuating circumstances, no individual passions, could ever affect their counsels. States, like individuals—for the decisions of states are really the decisions of individuals—commonly act from mixed motives; and, as most men would feel no small difficulty in analysing their own motives, we may feel still more difficulty in analysing those of the Roman Senate. So much generosity as to shut out all thought for self, so much selfishness as to shut out all thought for others, are both of them the exception in human affairs. To act generously, provided it does no great harm to yourself, is, we fancy, the commonest rule both with rulers and with private men. There is no need to think that, when Flamininus proclaimed the freedom of Greece, it was mere hypocrisy on the part either of him or of his government. But we cannot think that either Flamininus or the Roman Senate would knowingly have sacrificed a jot of Rome's real power or real interest to any dream of philhellenic generosity. It is easy however to see that a strong philhellenic feeling did really exist in the mind of Flamininus and of many other Romans of his day. Greece was then newly opened to Roman inquirers; Greek civilization and literature were beginning to

make a deep impression upon the Roman mind, both for good and for evil. The famous cities of Greece had already become places of intellectual pilgrimage. The natural result was that, for at least a generation, both Greek allies and Greek enemies received better treatment than allies or enemies of any other race. Achaia and Athens were favoured and, as it were, humoured to the highest degree that was not clearly inconsistent with Roman interests. But the tide must have turned not a little before Mummius destroyed Corinth, even before Lucius Æmilius Paullus was forced, against his will, to destroy the Epeirot cities. The phænomenon may well have been analogous to one of our own days with regard to the same land. A generation back men looked for results from the emancipation of Greece which were utterly extravagant and chimerical. The fashion now is to decry everything to do with independent Greece, and to deny the real progress she has made, because impossible expectations have not come to pass. A generation of Mummii has, in short, succeeded to a generation of Flaminini. Mommsen, we should remark, by no means shares or approves of the philhellenism of the victor of Kynoskephalê.* He has throughout a way of dealing more freely with established heroes, of casting about censure with a more unsparing hand, than is altogether consistent with the sort of vague and half superstitious reverence with which one cannot help looking on the men of old. Indeed, he sometimes passes from criticism and censure into the regions of sarcasm, almost of mockery; he deliberately quizzes 'Plutarch's men' with as little compunction as Punch quizzes the men of our own time. Contemporary events have brought this home very strongly to our mind. While reading Mommsen's account of what we may call the Lord High Commissionership of Titus Quinctius Flamininus, we could more than once have fancied that we were reading an attack in some English paper on him whom

* [Against Mommsen's treatment of these matters I was stirred up to make a protest in my History of Federal Government, i. 640.]

modern Hellas delights to honour as ὁ περίφημος καὶ φιλέλλην Γλάδστων.*

Mommsen, following Polybios, makes the battle of Pydna one great stage in his history. Rome's work of conquest was now practically over; there was now little left to do but to gather in the spoil. She had yet many battles to fight, many provinces to win, but there was no longer any Mediterranean power able to contend with her on equal terms for the lordship of the Mediterranean world. And now she began to show how little fitted her constitution was to administer an universal empire. Men commonly look to this period of Roman history for arguments for or against monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy. Possibly all such may be found; but the most truly instructive lesson which it teaches is one into which those questions do not immediately enter. That lesson is one which, to the nineteenth century, has become almost matter of curiosity; but it was a practical lesson as long as Venice ruled over Corfu and Kephallênia, as long as Vaud obeyed the mandates of the oligarchy of Bern. That lesson is this, one well set forth by Mommsen in several passages, that a municipal government is unfitted to discharge imperial functions. Such a municipal government may be either aristocratic or democratic; but in either case it governs solely in the interest of the ruling city. It need not be tyrannical—Bern was far from being so; but the subject states, the provinces or dependencies, have no share in their own government, and their interest is not the object of those who rule them. This warning will of course apply to all states which hold colonies or dependencies; but the cause is not the same. The Roman Government, with its Senate, its popular Assembly, its annually elected magistrates, was a government essentially municipal; it was fitted only for the government of a single city. It had indeed, as if its founders had foreseen the danger, something of a representative element from the beginning. The ruling principle of the ancient city govern-

* [This was of course written when Mr. Gladstone's mission to the Ionian Islands was fresh in men's minds.]

ments, aristocratic and democratic alike, was, we need hardly say, that every member of the ruling body, be that body the widest democracy or the narrowest oligarchy, should have his personal share in the government, that he should give his direct vote in the sovereign Assembly. But the territory of the Roman city spread, at a very early time, over a region far too wide to allow every Roman citizen to appear habitually in the *comitia*. Had the voting gone by heads, the dwellers in the city would have had it all their own way. This was hindered by the tribe system. Each of the thirty-five tribes had one vote. On the day fixed for an election or for voting on a law, half a dozen citizens from a distant tribe had the same voice as the hundreds or thousands of a nearer one. In fact, as Niebuhr suggests, those half-dozen rural voters might really be the chosen delegates of the hundreds or thousands of their neighbours. Hence the importance of the legislation of Appius Claudius and of the counter-legislation of Fabius and Decius. Appius divided the freedmen, the *turba forensis*, the Lambeth and Tower Hamlets of Rome, among all the then existing tribes; that is, he put the votes of all the tribes into their hands. Fabius and Decius removed them all into the four city tribes, so that they could command four votes only. But, even with this modification, the Roman popular Assembly became, what the Ekklêsia never became at Athens, a body utterly unmanageable, which could only cry 'Yea, yea,' to the proposals of the magistrates, and in which debate was out of the question. And, after all, Senate and Assembly alike represented purely Roman interests; the Allies, still less the provinces, had no voice in either body. It was as if the liverymen of London were to pass laws and appoint to offices for the whole United Kingdom. Under the municipal system of Rome there was no help. Had Italy and the world been received into the old tribes, or mapped out into new tribes, it would only have made the Assembly yet more unwieldy than it was already. A representative or a federal system would have solved the problem without any sacrifice of freedom. But a representative system

the ancient world never knew; though the Achaian, the Lykian, though, as we have seen, the Roman system itself, hovered on the verge of it. Federalism was indeed at work in its most perfect form in Lykia and Achaia; but it would have been vain to ask Roman pride to allow conquered nations to set up Senates and Assemblies of equal rank with those of Rome herself. The monarchy of the Cæsars cut the knot in another way: the provincial could not be raised to the level of the citizen, but the citizen could be dragged down to the level of the provincial. Both now found a common master. The provincials no doubt gained by the change. It is indeed true that the municipal origin of the Roman Empire, and the covert way in which monarchy gradually crept in under republican forms, caused the capital always to keep an undue importance, and made, first Rome and then Constantinople, to flourish at the cost of the provinces. But the evil was far less under the Empire than it had been under the Republic. The best Emperors did what they could to rule in the interest of the whole Empire, and the worst Emperors were most dangerous to those to whom they were nearest. The overthrow of the Roman Republic, the establishment of the Cæsarean despotism, was the overthrow of the very life of the Roman city; but to the Roman Empire it was a bitter remedy for a yet more bitter disease. It proves nothing whatever in favour of despotism against liberty; it establishes no law that democracy must lead to military monarchy. Athens and Schwyz had to bend to foreign invaders; but no Prytanis or Landammann ever wrought a *coup-d'état*. What the later history of Rome does prove is that a single city cannot govern an empire; that for a subject province one master is less to be dreaded than seven hundred thousand. Those seven hundred thousand citizens were, among themselves, a frantic mob rather than an orderly democracy: as against the millions of Roman subjects from the Ocean to the Euphrates, they were an oligarchy as narrow and exclusive as if they had all been written in the Golden Book of Venice. The experience of the last age of Roman history proves nothing against any

form of freedom, be it Athenian democracy, English monarchy, or Swiss or Achaian federalism. If it has any immediate practical warning for our own time, it is a warning against the claims of overgrown capitals. It has lately become the fashion to call the seat of government the 'metropolis,' and the rest of the kingdom the 'provinces'; names unknown to English law, and foreign to all English feeling. If we begin to give eight members to the Tower Hamlets, the words may perhaps begin to have a meaning; and Manchester and Arundel, Caithness and Tipperary, may alike have to look out for a Fabius and a Decius to deliver them from the *turba forensis* of a single overgrown city.*

* [Since this was written we have had another Reform Bill, which, though it has increased the number of 'metropolitan' members, has not done so to any frightful extent. It has always struck me that, though members should not be given or refused to places in the haphazard way in which they still are, even after the last changes, it would none the less be a mistake to allot members in exact proportion to numbers. I could never agree to jumble together towns and counties, large towns and small towns, without regard to their distinct feelings and interests. And the greater a constituency is, the fewer members it needs in proportion to its numbers, because it has greater means of influencing Parliament and the country in other ways. In the case of London this reaches its height; every member of Parliament is in some sort member for London; his mind is open to London feelings and influences in a way in which it is not open to influences from Cornwall, Galway, or Orkney. The money of the people of Galway and Orkney is very likely to be spent on objects which concern only the people of London; the money of the people of London is not at all likely to be spent on objects which concern only the people of Galway or Orkney. The interests of the smaller constituencies need therefore to be protected. in the House by giving them a proportionately larger number of members. But this object is not fairly reached by giving, as at present, members purely at random to certain towns, while other towns of the same class are without any. The true solvent is the grouping of the smaller towns for electoral purposes. In strictness of speech, London, though the *capital* of England and of the United Kingdom, is the *metropolis* of nothing except its own colony Londonderry. The parliamentary and vulgar use of the word 'metropolis' most likely comes from the fact that, while 'London' would in legal language mean nothing but the City of London, a word was wanted to express that great collection of houses which forms London in the popular and practical sense. As for 'provinces,' the application of the name to any part of Great Britain, except in an ecclesiastical sense, is simply insulting. A province is a subject state ruled by a Proconsul, Satrap, or Viceroy. The word has no meaning in an island every corner of which has equal rights. How far Ireland, as long as she cleaves to the obsolete pageant of a nominal Satrap, may not be looked on as sinking to the level of a province of her own free will, is another question.]

# MOMMSEN'S HISTORY OF ROME.*

FIVE-AND-TWENTY years ago the Roman History of Niebuhr was dominant at Oxford. An examination in Livy was practically an examination in Niebuhr. If any shrank from the task of getting up Niebuhr himself in the crib—few in those days ventured on the High-Dutch text—to such Arnold acted as the prophet of Niebuhr. Men whom oceans now separate took in those days sweet counsel together, in college gardens or by the banks of canals, strengthening each other's memory in the wars of the Æquians and Volscians as mapped out by the great authority. But an University is, beyond all others, the place of change, the place where the wisdom of forefathers, and even of elder brothers, is least regarded. Since those days, generation after generation has passed through the world of Oxford, each knowing less of Niebuhr than the one before it. The fall of Niebuhr was, we believe, followed by a period—shall we call it a period of anarchy or of tyranny?—when no inspired modern interpreter was recognized, but when men fell back on the text of Livy himself. The Commonwealth, in short, was without a master; Sulla had gone, and Cæsar had not yet appeared. Dr. Liddell's attempt at grasping the vacant post came hardly to more than the attempt of Marcus Lepidus. At last Mommsen arose, and, at the time of our last advices, Mommsen ruled in the University without a competitor. We speak cautiously, because of the swift march of all Oxford doings. We never have any certainty whether the brilliant discovery of last term may not be a sign of old fogyism this term. The statutes passed by acclamation a year back are by this time dragged through the dirt like the images of Sejanus. So we do not affirm positively that Mommsen is at this moment the supreme authority on Roman History at Oxford. We only say that he was so the last time that we heard any news upon the subject.

We half regret, but we are not in the least surprised at the position which Mommsen's work has won. It is a position which in many respects is fully deserved. Mommsen has many of the highest qualities of an historian. First of all, he has the qualification which is the groundwork of all others; he is a thorough, a consummate, scholar. We stand aghast at some of his statements and inferences, but we never catch him in a blunder. On the contrary he is thoroughly master—master in a way of which few men ever have been—of the history, the antiquities, the language and philology, of the people of whom he writes. He has worthily won the right to be heard on any point on which he speaks, and the corresponding right, whenever we think him wrong, to be answered. If we hold him, as we do, to be in many ways an untrustworthy guide, it is on grounds poles asunder from any charge of ignorance, carelessness, or inaccuracy.

To this sterling merit Mommsen adds another merit equally sterling. He always tells his story clearly; he often tells it with extraordinary force. We

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* [This is printed nearly as it was written, merely leaving out one or two sentences whose point was only temporary.]

quarrel with much both in his matter and in his manner, but his book contains many passages of the highest historic power. To take instances from the parts which, coming last, we have last read, it would be very hard to surpass Mommsen's description of the state of Gaul at the time of Cæsar's invasion, of the warfare of the Parthians against Crassus, and, above all, of the whole career, especially the legislation, of Cæsar. We are here fairly carried away in spite of ourselves. We think of another historian of Cæsar, and we try to measure the gap, not by stadia but by parasangs.

In this last quality Mommsen is the exact opposite of Niebuhr. Niebuhr could not tell a story; he could hardly make an intelligible statement. His setting forth of his own opinions is so jumbled up with his citations and his arguments that it is no slight work to know what his opinions are. He pours forth as it were the whole workings of his own mind upon the subject, and we cannot always tell the last stage from the first. Mommsen, on the other hand, without troubling us with the process, gives us the results in the clearest shape. We should very often like to ask him his reason or authority for saying this or that. We never feel any need to ask him, as we should very often like to ask Niebuhr, what it is that he means to say.

Here then are merits real and great, enough of themselves to account for Mommsen's having many and zealous disciples. And, though we have a long bill of indictment to bring against him, most of our charges are charges of faults which have somewhat of the nature of merits, or which at any rate may easily be mistaken for merits. Mommsen has faults, but we cannot say that he has failings. His errors are never on the side of weakness or defect. They are errors on a grand scale. If Mommsen made history instead of writing it, we could fancy him committing a great crime; we could not fancy him playing a shabby trick. He might level a city with the ground; he might behead four thousand prisoners in a day; but he would not vex an unlucky newspaper editor with the small shot of a Correctional Police. There is nothing weak or petty about him from beginning to end. His faults are all of them of a striking, of what to many people is a taking kind. Foremost among these faults we reckon his daring dogmatism—the way in which he requires us to believe, on his sole *ipse dixit*, without the shadow either of argument or of authority, things which we have never before heard of, as if they were things which no man had ever thought of doubting. But we have no doubt that to many people this very daring is attractive. We can fancy its being especially attractive to the present generation of young Oxford men. It gratifies the love of novelty and paradox, and it gratifies it in a grand sort of way. There is a special temptation blindly to follow a man who clearly is not a fool, who no doubt could, if he chose, give a reason for everything that he says, but who deals with things too much in the grand style to stoop to give any reasons. Niebuhr gives you elaborate theories about the early history of Rome, but he also gives you, though in a somewhat clumsy way, his reasons for forming those theories. In this there is a certain confession of weakness. But when Mommsen gives you theories equally startling in a calm way as if there never had been, and never could be, any doubt about them, his very confidence in himself is apt to breed confidence in a certain class of readers. Mommsen and Niebuhr, in short, remind us of the story of the general who, when appointed to the governorship of a West India island, found that he had

also to act as a judge. As long as he did not give his reasons, his judgements gave universal satisfaction; but when, fancying himself a great lawyer, he ventured to give his reasons, his judgement was at once appealed against. So we suspect that there is a class of readers who never think of appealing from Mommsen, while they would at once appeal from Niebuhr. On ourselves we confess that the effect is different. We see that what Mommsen says is always very clear and very taking; we think it very likely that he has good reasons for what he says; but we certainly should be better pleased if he gave us his reasons and quoted his authorities.

We can fancy again that many tastes are pleased, though our own are distinctly offended, at the way in which Mommsen deals with various matters, and especially with various persons whom other writers have taught us to reverence. Mommsen can be grave and earnest when he chooses, but he too often chooses to treat things and persons in a vein of low sarcasm which we must look upon as altogether unworthy of his subject. Whatever and whoever displeases Mommsen is sure to be set upon by him with a torrent of what we can call nothing but vulgar slang. All sorts of queer compounds, of strange and low allusions, are hurled at the heads of men for whom we are old-fashioned enough to confess a certain respect. Why are Pompeius and Cato always to be called names? Though to be sure, as to Cato Mommsen does not keep on to the end exactly as he begins. At first he does nothing but mock at him; but towards the end of his tale Mommsen seems for once to be impressed with the real grandeur of an honest man. And worse still is his treatment of Cicero. The weaknesses of Cicero's character are manifest, and no honest historian will try to hide them. But surely he is not a man whom it is right or decent to make a mere mark for contemptuous jeers, for his name never to be uttered without some epithet of scorn. This kind of thing seems to us to be bad in every way. It is bad in point of taste and art, and it is thoroughly unfair as a matter of history.

This last point is closely connected with another fault. We mean Mommsen's custom of using strange words, and common words in strange senses—words and senses which often seem still stranger in the English than they do in the German. We believe that it is just allowable in German to call Sulla a 'Regent'; it certainly is not allowable in English. Here, it may be said, the fault lies directly, not with Mommsen, but with his English translator. We do not think so. Mommsen has a way of using words like this 'Regent,' words which would pass unnoticed if they came only casually, as if they were technical terms. In fact Mommsen confers titles on his characters out of his own head. If we find Sulla and others systematically called 'Regent,' even in German, much more in English, it is hard for the reader to avoid the notion that 'Regent' was a real description used at the time. It is still worse when Mommsen constantly speaks of Cæsar as 'Monarch' and even as 'King.' We see what he means; it is meant as a forcible way of saying that Cæsar's power was really kingly, that the commonwealth had become a practical monarchy. We suspect also that he means to contrast the despotism of the first Cæsar—certainly the more openly avowed of the two—with the more carefully veiled despotism of the second. Still we cannot think that it is a right way of expressing the truth to call Cæsar, not in a bit of passing rhetoric, but frequently and deliberately, Monarch and even King. It cannot fail to convey a false idea to the reader.

Mommsen too is not free from the fashionable way of personifying this and that, Revolution and Reaction and so forth, though he does not carry the fashion so far as many French writers. And he has throughout a way of using words of his own making or choosing in this sort of technical fashion of which we cannot approve. The Regency of Sulla and the Monarchy of Cæsar are only two cases among many. This tendency can hardly be separated from views of facts which we cannot but look upon as erroneous. Mommsen, with the rise of the coming Empire in his head, goes back as far as the Gracchi, and thinks that Caius contemplated, or at least dreamed of, something like kingship. For this we cannot see a shadow of evidence.

Mommsen's style, strictly so called, is a matter rather for German than for English critics; yet the interest which we take in a noble and kindred tongue, a tongue whose European importance is daily growing, compels us to say a few words. We are doubtless behind the age when we pronounce Mommsen to be one of the worst corrupters of our common Teutonic speech. High-Dutch, like English, is just now exposed to an inroad of Latin, or rather French, words, which it seems to be looked on as high-polite to prefer to the tongue of our common fathers. And there is a difference between the two cases which makes the fault on the part of our continental brethren still more unpardonable than it is among ourselves. An Englishman cannot speak perfectly pure Teutonic, if he wishes; a High-Dutchman may. First of all, owing to early events in our history, there is a certain class of Romance words which have been naturalized in English for ages, and against which no one wishes to say anything. Secondly, our language seems to have to a great degree lost its flexibility and power of throwing off new words, so that the stoutest Teutonic purist cannot forbid the use of Romance words to express ideas which are at all technical or abstract. We are of course using them freely as we now write. But neither of these necessities is laid on the High-Dutchman. There is nothing in his tongue answering to what we may call the Norman, as opposed to the Latin or French, infusion into our language, and the number of the purely Latin words introduced at an earlier date is not very large. And as for new words, the High-Dutch tongue, unlike our own, can make them as readily now as it could a thousand years back. If a German wants a new word for a new thought, he has nothing to do but to make it in his own tongue. Yet, in defiance of all this, the German language is being flooded with every kind of absurd French invention, *orientiren, bornirt*, nobody knows what; we look for a speedy day when *mangiren* and *diren* will supplant *essen* and *sagen*. No one is a greater sinner in this way than Mommsen; he seems to take a distinct delight in corrupting the speech of his fathers to the extremest point. Why talk about 'Insurgenten' and 'Concurrenten' and 'Proclamationen' and 'Patrouillen'? why give us such foul compounds as 'Coteriewesen' and 'Rabulistenart'? We have not come across any German writer of the same pretension as Mommsen who is in this respect so guilty as Mommsen. His fellow-worker in the series in which his history is published, Ernst Curtius, the historian of Greece, writes a language which, though perhaps not quite the language of a hundred years past, is at any rate Dutch and not Welsh. 'Lond uns tütsch blyben,' said the old Swabian; 'die wälsch Zung ist untrü.' But Mommsen at least acts on quite another principle.

At the same time we must add in fairness that Mommsen's style, allowing

for his strange words and strange uses of words, is singularly clear, and often forcible. One has not with him, as with some German writers, to wander up and down a sentence in hopeless ignorance where one is, and to seek for the verb among thickets and quagmires miles away from its nominative case. But then this is equally true of Curtius, without the sad drawback of Mommsen's language. Dr. Dickson's translation, as far as we have compared it with the original, which we have done through many pages, is carefully and accurately done. He very seldom mistakes his author's meaning, and he commonly expresses it with all clearness. His fault is rather that he sticks so closely to the words of his author that his own sentences are rather German than English. This makes the English translation a little unpleasant to read.

But there is a fault in Mommsen's work, far graver than any of which we have spoken, and one which we think is of itself enough to make the book unfit for the position which it now holds at Oxford. It is not too much to say that Mommsen has no notion whatever of right and wrong, It is not so much that he applauds wrong actions, as that he does not seem to know that right and wrong have anything to do with the matter. No one has set forth more clearly than Mommsen the various stages of the process by which Rome gradually reduced the States round the Mediterranean to a state of dependence —what he, by one of the quasi-technicalities of which we complain, calls a state of clientship. It is, for clear insight into the matter, one of the best parts of the book. But almost every page is disfigured by the writer's unblushing idolatry of mere force. He cannot understand that a small state can have any rights against a great one, or that a patriot in such a state can be anything but a fool. Every patriotic Greek, every Roman philhellen, is accordingly brought upon the stage to be jeered at only less brutally than Cicero himself. His treatment of Cæsar is also characteristic in this way. Cæsar's still more famous biographer gives himself great trouble to justify every action of his hero, to prove that Cæsar was throughout a perfect patriot, unswayed by any motive save the purest zeal for the public good. All this is ridiculous enough ; still it is, after all, a certain homage paid to virtue. Mommsen is intellectually above any such folly ; at any rate he never trifles with facts, and it seems perfectly indifferent to him whether Cæsar, or anybody else, was morally right or wrong. It is enough for him that Cæsar was a man of surpassing genius, who laid his plans skilfully and carried them out successfully. The only subject on which Mommsen ever seems to be stirred up to anything like moral indignation is one not very closely connected with his immediate subject, namely American slavery. It is however some comfort that he does not, like Mr. Beesly, go in for Catilina.

We need not review in detail a book which every one who cares for its subject is likely to have read already. We admire Mommsen's genius, his research, his accuracy, as warmly as any of his followers can. We hold that his book is most valuable for advanced scholars to compare with other books, to weigh his separate statements, and to come to their own conclusions. But a book which gives no references, which puts forth new theories as confidently as if they were facts which had never been doubted—above all, a book which seems perfectly indifferent to all considerations of right and wrong, seems to us, when put alone into the hands of those who are still learners, to be thoroughly dangerous and misleading.

# VIII.

## LUCIUS CORNELIUS SULLA.*

In a former Essay we touched slightly on some of the political phænomena of the last age of the Roman Commonwealth, but without going into any details, and without examining individual characters at any length. We now propose to work out rather more fully some of the points which were there casually brought in, especially as they are illustrated by the life and character of the most wonderful man of his generation, the Dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla.

Among the many writers by whom the time of Marius and Sulla has been treated in our own times, it is not needful to speak here of more than two. Mommsen has dealt with it at great length, and with all his usual power. Of Sulla himself he has drawn one of his most elaborate pictures, traced with that vigorous hand every touch of which is striking and instructive, whether it commands assent in every detail or not. Here, as elsewhere, Mommsen errs on the side of being wise above that which is written; a few strokes here and there are plainly due to the imagination of the painter. But when any one has, by careful study of his authorities, gained such an idea of a man or a period as those authorities can give him, it is pardonable, and indeed unavoidable, to fill

* [This Essay, in its original state, had as its heading the names of several works, German and English. But as the part of the Article which was given to the criticism of those works could easily be separated from the general historical matter, I have cut out all the critical part, save a reference here and there, as being of merely temporary interest. But, for those who may remember the article as it stood in the National Review, I think it right to add that there is not a word in those criticisms, any more than in those which were contained in the article quoted in page 47, which I see any reason to withdraw or regret on its own account.]

up an outline which cannot fail to be imperfect with a few conjectural strokes of his own. It is a great matter to know clearly what kind of idea of Sulla, or of any other man, is conveyed to the mind of a judge like Mommsen by the writings on which we have to depend. Even when there are points on which we claim to ourselves the right utterly to dissent, the result is very different from the blunders of men who do not read their books with care, or from the solemn emptiness of men who read with all their might, but whom nature has forbidden to understand.

Long before Mommsen, in a time indeed which is now perhaps wholly forgotten, Dr. Arnold wrote for the Encyclopædia Metropolitana that sketch of the later Roman History which has since been republished as a continuation of his imperfect History of Rome. It was a comparatively youthful production, and it certainly does not show that full maturity of power which comes out in the matchless narrative of the Hannibalian War. But it was the worthy beginning of a great work; and it is quite in its place as the best, though doubtless an imperfect, substitute for what Arnold would have given us had he been longer spared. It already shows that clear conception of the politics of the time which shines forth so conspicuously in Arnold's finished History; and, in the part with which we are now concerned, he displays less of that partizan feeling which comes out, perhaps too strongly, in his narrative of the wars of Cæsar and Pompeius. And, above all, Arnold showed then, as ever, that pure and lofty morality, that unflinching determination to apply the eternal laws of right and wrong to his estimate of men of every age and country, which distinguishes him above every other writer of history. Perhaps he sets up too high a standard; perhaps he is now and then hard upon men who may fairly claim to be judged according to their own light. But it is something to have history written by one who does not worship success; by one who never accepts intellectual acuteness, literary power, or firmness of purpose, as any substitute for real moral worth; by one who never swerves from the doctrine that the same

moral law must judge of dealings between commonwealth and commonwealth, between party and party, which judges of dealings between man and man. Never did Arnold rise to a higher pitch of moral grandeur than in his character of Sulla himself. He refuses to accept Sulla's taste for elegant literature as the slightest set-off against his crimes; he tells us plainly that the indulgence of intellectual tastes is as much a personal gratification as the indulgence of sensual tastes, and that the one is not in itself, apart from the ends to which it is used, entitled to one jot more of moral approbation than the other.

We will now turn to our ancient authorities. We have for the age of Sulla, as for so many other important periods of history, no one consecutive contemporary narrative. This is to be the more regretted, as the contemporary materials must have been specially rich. The age of Sulla was an age of memoir-writing at Rome, just like the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France. Sulla himself left an autobiography, and so did many other eminent men of the age. But all their writings have perished; for the age of Marius and Sulla we have no such contemporary stores as we have in abundance for the age of Cæsar and Pompeius. Of that age too we have no complete contemporary narrative; but then we have the countless letters and orations of Cicero for the whole time, and we have the narratives of Cæsar and his officers for a part of it. Of Sulla's Memoirs we have not so much as fragments; we have no letters and very few speeches; the earliest orations of Cicero belong to the last days of Sulla. As for writers not contemporary, among formal writers of history Sallust comes nearest to the time, and next to him Livy. We have also Appian's History of the Civil War, and Plutarch's Lives of Marius and Sulla; there are also numerous allusions to events of the Sullan age both in Cicero and in later and inferior writers.*

* [There is also the account given in the sketch of Roman History written by Velleius in the early days of the reign of Tiberius, and the fragments of the great work of Diôn Cassius. Velleius is of special importance, as he writes in some sort from the point of view of the Italian Allies. He gives some

When we say that Sallust was not a contemporary writer, we mean that he could not write from actual personal knowledge. He was born in B.C. 86, the year of the death of Marius, and eight years before the death of Sulla. Still the events of Sulla's dictatorship were such as must have made some impression on an intelligent child; he had plenty of opportunities of conversing with spectators and actors; and he had access to the documents, speeches, and memoirs of the time while they were still in their freshness. Sallust therefore, if we had his guidance throughout, would be an authority all but contemporary. But unluckily the work in which he treated of the Social and Civil Wars has perished. In his Jugurthine War however we have the narrative of the earliest important exploits of the two rivals. We have characters of both drawn by a master's hand; and we have a speech, whose substance at least is probably genuine, from Caius Marius himself. Among the fragments of Sallust we have also a speech against Sulla from the Consul Marcus Æmilius Lepidus, and a speech against Lepidus by Lucius Marcius Philippus, both belonging to the year of Sulla's death.

Of Livy's History of this age we have only the Epitomes, but these Epitomes form a complete, though, of course, far from a detailed narrative. They sometimes help us to facts, at all events to statements, which are not found elsewhere. Thus it is only in the Epitome of Livy that we are distinctly told that Marius and Cinna entered on the consulship in B.C. 86 simply by their own will and pleasure, without even the form of an election. What we have lost in these

important details of the war, and his characters of Marius and Sulpicius are specially striking. Diôn, a Senator and Consul under the Emperors from Pertinax to Alexander Severus, is in point of date the latest of our authorities, but his thorough knowledge of the Roman history and constitution, and his access to and use of official documents, make him practically nearer to the time than Plutarch or Appian. But of Diôn's History at this time we have nothing but a few scraps, till we get to Sulla's proscription, which an extant fragment describes in some detail. Both Velleius and Diôn seem to believe in a sudden change in Sulla's character, which strikes me as neither historical nor philosophical.]

books of Livy can hardly be guessed at. The carelessness and ignorance which disfigure his treatment of early times would not have affected his narrative of days so near to his own; the charm of his style would have been joined with real knowledge of his subject, and, we have every reason to believe, with as fair a judgement of men and things as we have any right ever to expect.

Our main authorities then, after all, are the later Greek writers, Plutarch and Appian. Plutarch, living under the Emperors from Nero to Hadrian, is about as far removed from the age of Marius and Sulla as we are now from the last half of the seventeenth century. Appian comes a generation later; Marius and Sulla were to him as Charles the First and his adversaries are to us. They therefore could write of the age of Sulla only as we can write of it ourselves, by examining and judging of such materials as they had at hand. They are therefore merely authorities at secondhand. Had we any contemporary writers, we should doubtless cast Appian aside as utterly as we cast aside Diodôros when we can get Thucydides; the charm of Plutarch's delightful biographies would probably save him in any case. As it is, we are thankful to them for preserving to us much of the substance of those original writers which they had before them, but which we have not. But in using them we exercise our own judgement in a degree which we do not venture to do when we read Thucydides, or when we read those parts of Polybios where he writes from his own knowledge. Here, as in the days of Aratos and Kleomenês, we have to stop and think whence our informants got their matter, and how far the narratives which they read were tinged with the passions of the time. Aratos and Sulla left autobiographies; there were no autobiographies of Lydiadas or of Marius. Plutarch, though his sound moral sense utterly abhorred Sulla's atrocities, clearly writes on the whole from the Sullan side. Doubtless Sulla's autobiography was one of his chief sources. Hence he is perhaps unfair to Marius; we may say, almost with certainty, that he is unfair to the Tribune Sulpicius,

whose character is certainly one of the hardest problems of the age. One German critic of these times* rules that Appian is to be preferred as an authority to Plutarch. We are inclined to agree with him, on the condition that no censure of Plutarch is implied. Plutarch writes with a special object, Appian with a general object. Plutarch tells us plainly that he does not write history; he writes the lives of great men with a moral purpose; he uses their actions only to throw light on their characters; he tells us that men's behaviour in small matters often throws more light on their character than their behaviour in great matters; therefore he dwells as much or more upon small anecdotes and sharp sayings as upon the gravest matters of politics. He might perhaps even have gone on to say that an apocryphal anecdote often throws as much light on a man's character as an authentic one. Current stories about people are often, perhaps generally, exaggerated; but the peculiar qualities which are picked out for exaggeration are pretty sure to show what a man's character really is. All this doubtless lessens Plutarch's direct value as an historical witness, but it does not at all lessen the merit of his work from his own point of view. Appian, a writer in every way inferior to Plutarch, does attempt, perhaps not very successfully, but still to the best of his power, to write a political history. We are perhaps unduly set against Appian by his narrative of the Hannibalian War, where we can compare him with first-rate historians, ancient and modern. In that narrative he undoubtedly falls as far below Livy as Livy himself falls below Polybios. But his narrative of the Civil War is evidently a more careful composition; he doubtless had more and better authorities before him, and he was better able to understand such authorities as he had. He at least tries to master the politics of the time, and we owe to him several pieces of information which are of great importance in illustrating them. Thus it is from him alone that we hear of the marked separation between the urban and the rural citizens during the tribuneship of

* [Lucius Cornelius Sulla: eine Biografie. Von Dr. Thaddæus Lau. Hamburg, 1855.]

Saturninus, and of the strange temporary alliance between the aristocracy and the mob of the Forum. On the whole, Appian seldom contradicts Plutarch, though he often explains his difficulties and fills up his blanks. On the other hand, we must add that in the European part of the Mithridatic War Plutarch had an advantage of local knowledge above all writers of any age. Sulla's two great battles, Chairôneia and Orchomenos, were both fought in Plutarch's native province, and one of them close to his native town.

Such are the authorities, partly fragmentary, partly second-hand, from which we have to gather up our knowledge of this remarkable period, and of the two remarkable men who were the leading actors in it. We may fairly wish that we had fuller and more thoroughly trustworthy accounts; but, compared with our knowledge of some other ages, we have reason to be thankful for what we have. There is quite enough, we think, if it be carefully and critically weighed, to enable us to put together a fairly accurate picture both of Marius and Sulla personally, and of the age in which they lived.

In a former Essay a general sketch was given of the relations which existed between the Roman Commonwealth and the states which stood to her in various degrees of subjection or dependent alliance. We there left Rome, after the victory of Pydna, still far from possessing the universal empire of after days, but already without a rival on equal terms in the lands round the Mediterranean. In the sixty years between the battle of Pydna and the first appearance in history of Marius and Sulla, the Roman dominion had been greatly extended, but it may be doubted whether the real power of Rome had been at all increased in proportion. We left Carthage still a flourishing city, internally free, if externally dependent on Rome; we left Achaia still a free confederation, whose dependence was in theory even slighter than that of Carthage. Now those free states have sunk into the Roman provinces of Africa and Achaia, and the great cities of Carthage and Corinth have vanished in one year from the face of the earth. Pergamos,

then a powerful kingdom, a cherished ally of Rome, is now the Roman province of Asia. Macedonia, which, on the overthrow of her King, had received a mockery of freedom, is now a province also. The Roman power was now fast advancing in Gaul, and Roman colonies were beginning to be planted beyond the Alps. Numidia still kept her Kings, but after Massinissa they were the vassals rather than the allies of Rome. Syria, Egypt, Mauritania, were the only Mediterranean kingdoms which still kept any share of independence. Republican freedom lived on only in the Lykian Confederation and in a few outlying Greek islands and cities. But each of Rome's territorial acquisitions gave her a new frontier to defend, and new enemies to defend it against. Rome was no longer threatened by Gaulish invaders, but Roman Gaul had to be defended against independent Gauls and wandering Germans. Macedonia was no longer the oppressor of Greece and the rival of Rome; but Rome had now to do Macedonia's old duty of guarding the civilized world against the Barbarians of Thrace and Mœsia. Rome had now firmly planted her foot on the Asiatic mainland; but she now had to do for herself what Pergamos had once done for her, to keep in check the rising and reviving powers of the further East. The municipal system of Rome, admirable as it was as the goverment of a single city and its immediate territory, was wholly unfit either to administer so vast a dominion, or to carry on the wars which its possession constantly brought with it. The conduct of a war fell, by Roman law, to one of the Consuls of the year. Now, to say nothing of the not uncommon case of actual corruption or cowardice, it clearly would often happen that a Consul who was quite fit to be the civil chief of the commonwealth, who was quite fit to carry on a war of the old local Italian kind, would utterly break down when sent to carry on war in distant lands against unknown and adventurous enemies. Hence a Roman war of this period commonly begins with two or three years of defeat and disgrace, followed by complete victory as soon as the right man, Flamininus or Scipio

or Metellus or Marius, is sent to retrieve the blunders or the treachery of his predecessors. The cause is plain enough. The People of Rome, till they became open to bribes, were quite fit to choose ordinary magistrates for their own commonwealth; they were not fit to choose generals and administrators for the whole civilized world.

Within the commonwealth matters were worse still. The old distinctions of patrician and plebeian—distinctions whose historical and religious origin did something to lessen their bitterness—had utterly passed away. The glorious age of harmony and victory which followed their abolition had now passed away also. Instead of patricians and plebeians, we now see the nobles and the people, the rich and the poor. The nobles were fast shrinking up into a corrupt and selfish oligarchy. The people were fast sinking into a venal and brutal mob. The old plebeian yeomanry, the truest glory of Rome, were fast dying out; their little farms were swallowed up in vast estates tilled by slaves; and the Consul or Tribune who spoke to the Quirites in the Forum now commonly spoke to a mongrel rabble of naturalized strangers and enfranchised bondsmen. The Italian Allies, who had done so much for Rome's greatness, were still legally free, but they were exposed to all kinds of irregular oppression. Now indeed they were beginning to ask for Roman citizenship, and to see their righteous claims turned into a means to help on the schemes of political parties at Rome. The two Gracchi had done what they could to bring back a better state of things. Both of them had perished, and the blood of Tiberius was the first-fruits of the long civil wars and massacres of Rome. Step by step, the little that Caius had really done was undone by an encroaching oligarchy, by a thoughtless and ungrateful people. The old constitution was thoroughly worn out; the theoretical sovereignty of the People was used only to seal its own bondage and degradation; the wrongs of the Allies were making themselves heard more and more loudly. Subjection to the true Roman People, to the descendants of their conquerors, might perhaps have been borne; but subjection to

the vile populace who now filled the Roman Forum was a bondage too galling for the countrymen of Lars Porsena and Caius Pontius. Still the Italians could at least make their complaints heard; but the provincials had to suffer in silence, or to seek a mockery of justice from courts where the oppressor was judged by the partners of his guilt. Such was the state of the Roman commonwealth at the beginning of the memorable war with Jugurtha. It may be that, as Niebuhr says, we attribute an undue importance to that war. It may be that it was really only one of many like struggles, and that it only looks greater because it alone happens to have been chosen for a monograph by a great historian. Yet it is hard to believe that many of the barbarian chiefs with whom Rome had to strive on her vast frontier could have rivalled Jugurtha, either in his crimes, in his undoubted natural powers, or in the advantages of his half-Roman education. And however this may be, the Jugurthine war must ever be memorable as the first field on which Caius Marius and Lucius Sulla showed themselves to the eyes of after ages.

These two men, of whom each alike may be called at once the preserver and the destroyer of his country, were born in widely different ranks, but both were men who rose wholly by their own powers. Marius was by birth a man of the people in the best sense; he sprang neither from the proud nobility nor yet from the low populace of the Forum. He was a yeoman's son*

* This seems, on the whole, pretty well to express the position of the family of Marius. Mommsen surely goes too far in making him the son of a poor labourer (*eines armen Tagelöhner's Sohn*). Marius married a Julia; he most likely married her late in life, when he had already risen to distinction: still one can hardly fancy a Julia sinking, in any case, so low as the son of a day-labourer. There is moreover no sign of his ever being in difficulties for want of money. That quickly vanishing class among ourselves, intermediate between the higher farmers and the smaller gentry, would perhaps, better than any other, answer to his real position. Such a man may have even reached the equestrian census,—'natus *equestri* loco,' says Velleius, which it is dangerous to change into '*agresti*,'—and yet have been looked down on by the nobles for his rustic breeding and utter want of family honours.

[The whole portrait of Marius given by Velleius (ii. 11) is very striking. 'C. Marius, natus equestri loco, hirtus atque horridus, *vitaque sanctus*,

in the territory of the Volscian town of Arpinum, whose citizens had been admitted to the full Roman franchise only thirty years before his birth. Family honours he had none, liberal education he had none; his temper was rude and coarse, and on provocation brutally ferocious; he had little eloquence or skill in civil affairs, but he was not without a certain cunning, with which he tried to supply their place. On the other hand, he was a good soldier, a good officer, and we see no reason why we should not add, a good general. He rose from the ranks to his six consulships mainly, if not wholly, by his own merit. And to his new rank he carried with him many of the virtues of the state of life from which he rose: his morals were pure; he was a stern punisher of vice in others,* and the determined foe of luxury and excess of every kind. Above all, his sympathies lay wholly with the best element which was still left among the inhabitants of Italy. The villager of Arpinum, whose grandfather had not been a full citizen, felt with the remnant of the old rural plebeians; still more strongly perhaps did he feel with the unenfranchised Allies. If the daring plebeian bearded the nobles to their faces, the stout yeoman looked with no favour on the law which distributed corn among the idle populace of the city. The one act of his life which looks like truckling to the mere mob is capable of another meaning. Hitherto no one had served in the Roman army who had not some stake in the Roman state; Caius Marius was the first to enlist everybody who came. To him we may well believe that fighting and ploughing seemed the only callings worthy of a citizen; to turn *lazzaroni* into soldiers might seem a charitable work; if they died, the commonwealth was well rid of them; if they lived through the campaign, he had turned useless citizens into useful ones. The language of satire is not always the language of truth, but certainly no saying was ever truer than the noble lines of Juvenal, which set forth the glory and

quantum bello optimus, tantum pace pessimus, immodicus gloriæ, insatiabilis, impotens, semperque inquietus.']

* See the story of Trebonius and Lusius in Plutarch, Marius 14.

happiness of Marius, had he never shown himself on any stage but his own element, the field of battle.*

We will now turn to his rival. Lucius Cornelius Sulla had in his veins some of the oldest and proudest blood of Rome, and yet he owed almost as little to hereditary descent as Marius himself. He was a patrician of the patricians, a member of that great Cornelian Gens which gave Rome her Cossi and her Scipios, but his immediate forefathers were obscure, and his inherited wealth was probably smaller than that of the Volscian yeoman. Men might almost have looked to see him take the popular side, as that which was more natural to his position than the side of the nobles. But he was twenty years younger than Marius; his rival was committed to the one party, and he could become great only as the chief of the other. But neither rivalry with Marius nor the desire of personal greatness was at all the ruling passion in the heart of Sulla. If any man ever was a born aristocrat, he was one. Amidst all his vices and crimes, we cannot help yielding a certain admiration to the sincere, we might almost say disinterested, steadiness with which he clave to the political party which he had chosen. Sulla was not exactly ambitious, at least he at all times loved pleasure better than power; he utterly looked down on his fellow-creatures, and could not stoop to the ordinary arts of the demagogue. Had it been otherwise, he might no doubt have risen to sovereign power by the same course as Dionysios and Cæsar. His genius both for war and for politics was consummate; but he loved ease and luxury better than either; he took to public life as it were by fits and starts, and he at least professed to have been driven into the Civil War without any choice of his own. But, when he was once fairly on the scene, he carried out his object without flinching. That object was the restoration of what he held to be the old, uncorrupted, aristocratic govern-

* Juvenal, x. 298.

'Quid illo cive tulisset
Natura in terris, quid Roma beatius umquam,
Si circumducto captivorum agmine, et omni
Bellorum pompâ, animam exhalâsset opimam,
Quum de Teutonico vellet descendere curru?'

ment of Rome. To bring that about, neither law nor conscience stood in his way. He was not cruel in the sense of delighting in human suffering; his natural character indeed is said to have been eminently the reverse. He was easily moved to pity; he was capable of love, perhaps of friendship, in a high degree. But he stuck at no sort of crime which could, even indirectly, tend to compass his ends. 'Stone dead hath no fellow;' so he got rid of his prisoners and his political opponents by the most fearful massacres in European history. And more than this; as long as it suited his purpose, he winked at crimes of every kind in those whom he thought likely to be won by such licence to be useful tools for his purpose. An unscrupulous partizan was worth having; for the sake of such an one he would add names to the proscription-list which his own political ends would not have placed there. We may believe that Marius thoroughly enjoyed a massacre of his enemies, but that he would have shrunk from the wanton murder of any man who was not his enemy. Sulla took no pleasure in bloodshed,* but he would shed any amount of blood, guilty or innocent, which was likely to serve his ends. When his object was once gained, his cruelties came to an end. There is nothing in the rule of Sulla like the frantic tyranny of some of the Emperors, or of some Italian tyrants of later days. Nero lighted up Rome with burning Christians; Gian-Maria Visconti amused himself with hunting his subjects through the streets with bloodhounds. Sulla was never guilty of crimes of so foolish a kind. He did not kill people for mere sport, neither did he put them to death by torture.† To be sure, even when the

* Another German biographer of Sulla says :—'Aber es ist ein Unterschied zu machen, zwischen jener muthwilligen Grausamkeit, welche sich ihrer Unthaten erfreut, oder aus Rachsucht oder zur Befriedigung einer andern kleinlichen Leidenschaft mordet, und zwischen der Grausamkeit, welche, um einen grossen, an sich oder in den Augen des Handelnden, löblichen Zweck zu erreichen, kein Opfer für zu gross hält.' (Zachariä, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, 177; Mannheim, 1850.) The words are tinged with the author's spirit of apology for the crimes of Sulla, but they contain much truth.

† Marcus Marius Gratidianus was put to death in a horrible way during the proscription, but this was the private brutality of Catilina. That it was

proscription was over, he ever and anon reminded the People that they had given him power of life and death. When Ofella, one of his best officers, sued for the consulship in an illegal manner, Sulla had him cut down before all men in the Forum. By a more unjustifiable stretch of power, after he had laid down his dictatorship, he caused Granius of Puteoli to be strangled before his eyes for attempting to shirk or embezzle the local contribution to the rebuilding of the Capitol.* Of these two acts, the latter was a mere murder done by a private man, but it was a murder with a purpose, and that a public purpose. Through the whole of Sulla's tyranny there is nothing passionate; it is not so much cruelty as recklessness of human life; it is the cold, deliberate, exterminating, policy of a man who has an object to fulfil, and who will let nothing stand in the way of that object. We do not say this in justification, or even in palliation. The cold-blooded, politic, massacres of Sulla seem to us to imply a lower moral state than the ferocious revenge of Marius, or even than the bloody madness of Caius or Nero. In these latter cases indeed the very greatness of the crime becomes its own protection. Its doers seem to be removed out of the class of responsible human beings into the class of madmen or of wild beasts. But the massacres of Sulla were the deliberate acts of a man whose genius as scholar, statesman, and general altogether bars him from the poor excuse of those tyrants whom we charitably believe to have lost their senses. That such a man should have done such deeds puts human nature in a far more fearful light than it is put by the frantic crimes

done by Sulla's order is not to be inferred from the few words of Livy's Epitomator.

* The story of Ofella is given most fully by Appian (i. 101), who supplies the legal objection to Ofella's candidature, which is passed by in Plutarch and in the Epitome of Livy. One of Sulla's laws required that men should rise to the offices of the state in regular order: the Prætor must have served as Ædile, and the Consul must have served as Prætor. Quintus Ofella sued for the consulship *per saltum*, without having been Prætor or Ædile. Sulla bade him desist; and when he continued his canvass, he ordered a centurion to kill him.

of silly youths whose heads were turned by the possession of absolute power.

It is a very paltry and superficial view to attribute the acts of Sulla to 'passion' and 'fury,' and to hold that his end throughout was merely his own self-indulgence. Those who talk in this way must have read history carelessly indeed. That Sulla loved pleasure better than power we have already said; but, when once roused to political life, he had a political object which he followed out unflinchingly. His old patrician blood forbade him alike to aspire to be a King and to sink to be a demagogue. He would win back for the Roman aristocracy all its ancient pride and power. He would have no more turbulent mobs, no more factious Tribunes; he would have no more discontented Allies claiming to intrude themselves into the Roman Senate or the Roman Forum. The Senate of Rome should again rule Italy and the world. Etruria, Samnium, Lucania, dared to set themselves in array against the majesty of the Roman commonwealth. The strong arm of the Dictator came down on the rebels with the heaviest vengeance. Prisoners of war were slaughtered by thousands; cities were swept away and whole districts were wasted; the revolted nations were, as far as nations can be, swept from the face of the earth. Their annihilation secured Rome's supremacy, and their lands stood ready to reward the faithful soldiers of Rome and her Dictator. Inside the walls of Rome he followed out as vigorous a policy to secure the power of the Senate as he followed outside them to secure the power of Rome over Italy. Every tradition of the past was bound up in the honoured formula of the Senate and People. To have taken away all power from the People, to have made Rome like a narrow Greek oligarchy, would have been the act, not of a restorer but a revolutionist. But Sulla could lessen the power of the popular element by every restriction which savoured of antiquity, and he could do much to make the people degraded and subservient. At one blow he enfranchised ten thousand slaves whom his proscription had set free from their masters. They bore his name, they owed to him

their political being; ten thousand citizens, ten thousand Cornelii, were at once called into being to guard his person and to vote as he bade them. A Fabius or a Scipio would have shrunk with horror from tainting the Roman People with such a plague-spot. But Sulla was an aristocrat of the school of the old Claudii; he acted in the spirit of the Censor Appius when he scattered the freedmen through all the tribes. A degraded and mongrel people would be more subservient than the genuine, high-spirited plebeians of old. What Sulla least wished to see was a Commons of the old type, strong in the assertion of their own rights, but reverencing law and order; acting under the guidance of worthy leaders, but not prepared to be the satellites and bravos of any man. All his political legislation tended at once to degrade the popular character and to lessen the popular power. Legislation was transferred from the Assembly of the Tribes to that of the Centuries, where property had more weight than numbers; and even this more trustworthy body was allowed to vote only on such proposals as were laid before it by the Senate. The tribuneship was too old an institution to be swept away, but it might be made harmless. No man could now be Tribune who had not been at least Quæstor; the Tribune could no longer summon assemblies and propose laws; he who had been Tribune could not aspire to the loftier offices of Prætor and Consul. Men could henceforth only rise to the higher magistracies by regularly passing through the lower, with fixed intervals between each. The six successive consulships of the elder Marius, the consulship of the younger at the age of twenty, were thus wholly shut out. In everything, in the spirit if not in the letter, Rome was to go back to what she was before the Licinian Laws, almost to what she was before the Decemvirate.

In all this Sulla acted strictly as an aristocratic leader. He did not aspire to kingship, or even to tyranny. He founded no dynasty. He had children and kinsmen; but he did nothing to secure for them any superiority above other Roman nobles. He did not even keep his own power for his lifetime. Created Dictator, with absolute authority for an

unlimited time, he wielded his boundless powers with terrible effect till he looked on his work as done. He then laid down his office; he offered to account to all the world for his actions; and he withdrew to enjoy those pleasures, intellectual and sensual, which he loved better than governing the world. His crimes were greater in degree than those of either Cæsar or of either Buonaparte; but there is something in all this which sets him above any of the four. To say that Sulla had a conscience, to say that he followed any object because he thought it right, might be going too far; but he had an object before him which was not wholly selfish; he was above the vulgar ambition of becoming a King and the father of Kings. When the man who had killed—the reckoning is Appian's—fifteen Consulars, ninety Senators, two thousand six hundred knights, who had confiscated their goods and declared their children incapable of office, who had moreover wasted whole cities and lands, and had slaughtered a hundred thousand Romans and Italians either in his battles or in massacres after his battles,—when the man who had done all this offered to explain to any one his reasons for doing it, and walked home without a single lictor,—there was something in all this of mockery, something of utter contempt for mankind; but there was also something of a feeling that he had not been working and sinning only for his own gain or his own vanity; there was a kind of patriotism in the man, perverted and horrible as was the form which it took.

The private life of Sulla was as wide a contrast as can be thought of to the private life of Marius. Everything we hear of Marius leads us to believe that his household was an old Roman household of the best kind. But he was utterly without intellectual tastes or acquirements of any sort. Sulla, on the other hand, was a man of taste, a man of learning; he studied both Greek and Latin authors; he busied himself in writing the history of his own times down to the day of his death. He was a sensual and intellectual voluptuary; he was well pleased to unbend, to leave public affairs behind him; he loved sportive and merry conversation; he loved the com-

pany of actors and artists of all kinds, from men of high character like the great Quintus Roscius down to the lowest instruments, male and female, of his pleasures and his amusements. He indulged, seemingly through his whole life, in every form of sensual vice. And yet even his domestic life is not without its redeeming features. How far he was capable of friendship, as distinguished from political partizanship, we can hardly judge. Certainly towards his partizans, Pompeius, Crassus, and the viler Catilina, his error was on the side of indulgence. But the strangest part of his character in this way is shown in his relations to his successive wives. For an unfaithful husband to be also an affectionate husband is no very strange phænomenon; the annals of royal houses will supply examples enough. But Sulla was something much more than an unfaithful husband, he was a man given up to every kind of foul and unnatural debauchery, and yet he evidently both loved and was loved by those of his wives of whom we have any account. He married five times. Of his two first wives we know nothing but the names; the third, Cælia, he divorced on pretence of barrenness, in order to marry Cæcilia Metella. Metella plays no unimportant part in his history, and the relations of the pair were throughout those of confidence and affection. If he divorced her on her very death-bed, it was from a motive of religion, and by the order of the chiefs of the national worship; he was holding a solemn feast, and his house might not at such a time be defiled by mourning. But he made what amends he could by giving her a magnificent funeral, in defiance of one of his own laws. He ended by a strange love-match with a Valeria, the details of which, as given by Plutarch, remind us of a cause which has lately exercised the ingenuity of Irish and Scottish lawyers.*

* She sat next him at a show of gladiators and drew the hem of his toga over her, to share in his good luck. Then follows a whole story of courtship, a curious episode in such a life as that of Sulla. (Plut. Sulla 35.)

[The story is also told in a fragment of Diôn, i. 146 of Dindorf's edition. Both Plutarch and Diôn call this Valeria a sister of the great orator Hortensius, which can hardly be. See Drumann, Geschichte Roms, ii. 508.]

He had children by three of his wives. His only surviving son was of tender age when he died; but he left also a brother and a nephew, fuller materials for a Cornelian dynasty than Cæsar left for a Julian dynasty. But son, daughter, brother, nephew, were all left in their native rank of Roman patricians, to win such honours as the Roman People might give them.

The religion or superstition of Sulla is a curious subject, which Dr. Merivale, alone among the English historians of the time, has set forth as it deserves. Caius Marius, we have no doubt, sincerely and honestly, like a good citizen, said his prayers and offered his sacrifices to Jupiter of the Capitol and to Mars the father of Rome. If he carried about with him a Syrian—perhaps a Jewish—prophetess named Martha, we must remember that Jupiter and Mars were tolerant deities, who, as long as they were duly worshipped themselves, had nothing to say against strange Gods being worshipped also. Sulla's creed was more remarkable and personal. He was certainly not an Epicurean in the sense of shutting out the Gods from all care for human affairs. He had the deepest belief in fortune, in his own good luck; but that good luck did not come to him by blind chance, it was his portion as the special favourite of the Gods. But Sulla's religion was rather Greek than Roman. He was the favourite of Aphroditê: she gave him victories of all kinds; through her grace women yielded to him their favours, and his enemies yielded to him trophies and triumphs. He gave himself the title of Felix; he called his children by the hitherto unknown names of Faustus and Fausta; but his own Greek translation of Felix was Epaphroditos, the darling, not of blind chance, but of Aphroditê. He carried also, reminding one of Lewis the Eleventh, an image of the Delphian Apollo in his bosom, which he drew forth and addressed in fervent prayer in the heat of his great battle by the Colline Gate. In the height of his power, he dedicated a tenth of his substance to Hercules,* and it was in the midst of this festival that the

* [Mommsen makes the Latin *Hercules* to be an original Italian *Herculus* or *Herclus*. Preller (Römisch Mythologie, 640) rejects this. At any

priests made him divorce Metella. He paid strict heed to dreams and omens, he set them down in his Memoirs, and he bade his lieutenant Lucullus to attend above all things to the warnings which were thus given him by the Gods.* He put faith in Chaldæan soothsayers, who, in the midst of his greatness, dared to tell him when it was time for him to die. He believed in another world, and looked for a place in some paradise of his own, of whose nature one would like to hear more. Shortly before his death,—our authority is Sulla himself,—his young son Lucius, the deceased child of Metella, appeared to him in a dream, and bade him come and live with his mother in a land of rest and freedom from care. He had then, blood-stained and debauched as he was, some dream of a better state of things to which the Gods would admit their favourite, where wars and tumults were to be at an end, where the chaste love of Metella would still be in its place, but from which we may deem that Marius and Sulpicius, Nikopolis and Mêtrobios, would all alike be shut out. It is wonderful indeed thus to see the author of the Proscription going out of the world with hopes for the future such as might almost have cheered the death-bed of a Christian saint.

We have thus tried to draw the characters of these two mighty men, and we have drawn that of Sulla, as by far the more remarkable study of human nature, at much greater length than that of his rival. In so doing we have of course forestalled the mention of many particular actions of both. It is now time to see their characters more fully at work in a summary, however short, of the main events of their lives. The ancient writers delight in contrasts between the earlier and the later character both of Marius and of Sulla. The deliverer from the Cimbri and the deliverer from Mithridatês form a fine subject for rhetorical opposition to the party-

rate, by Sulla's time Hercules and the Greek Hêraklês were thoroughly confounded.]

* Plutarch, Sulla, 6.

leaders who deluged Italy with the blood of citizens. Now we have no doubt that Marius and Sulla, like so many other men, lived to do deeds of which they would once have believed themselves to be incapable. The young officer whom Scipio Æmilianus marked out for honour at Numantia, the young Quæstor who found out his marvellous diplomatic powers at the court of Bocchus, most surely neither of them looked forward to the day when each would lead hostile armies to the gates of Rome. But we do not believe in sudden changes in men's characters. Men's dispositions are born with them; their special developement is due to education, to after circumstances—in really wise and virtuous men, to diligent training of themselves. The deliverer of Rome was, in each case, not another man from her tyrant, but essentially the same man under different circumstances. Neither Marius nor Sulla did any great crime till comparatively late in life; had Sulla died at the age of fifty, and Marius at sixty, they would have filled a much smaller place in history than they do; but such place as they would fill would be in the character of faithful and useful servants of their country. But we do not believe in any sudden corruption. Each found himself in his later years placed under circumstances and laid open to temptations from which his youth had been free. The later man was something very different from the earlier, but the difference was one which was wholly brought about by the calling into full play of qualities which had hitherto slumbered or had been only feebly called forth.

Marius was more than fifty years old when he is brought before us by Sallust in the Jugurthine War. But he had already distinguished himself as an officer; he had won the marked approval of the younger Scipio; he had been Tribune of the Commons, and, as such, he had acted the by no means demagogic part of opposing the distribution of corn to the people. But he had won the hatred of the nobility by carrying a measure the object of which was, by some mechanical means, to give more freedom to the popular vote. He had filled the office of Prætor, and had administered a province

with credit. He had thus risen to curule rank, and would hand down some small share of nobility to his descendants. But he had won the bitter hatred of the class into which he had thus partially thrust himself. The new man at least should not be Consul. The new man himself was making ready by every means to compass his own elevation to the highest place in the state. Some of his arts, as recorded by Sallust, seem rather paltry; but, even among ourselves, men say things on the hustings which they would not say anywhere else. Metellus, his commander in Africa, a man otherwise of pure and noble character, deemed it his duty to throw every hindrance in his way. For a Marius to be Consul seemed then as monstrous to a Metellus as, two hundred and fifty years before, the like elevation of a Metellus would have seemed to Appius Claudius. A foolish insult on the part of Metellus brought matters to a head. Marius might stand for the consulship some day when the young Metellus was of age to be his colleague—that is, Marius might stand, if he pleased, when he was drawing near the age of eighty. Marius became Consul, Proconsul; he subdued Numidia; he led Jugurtha in triumph through the streets of Rome.* He was chosen, contrary to all law and custom, Consul for a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth time, in successive years, as the one man who could save Rome from the great Northern invasion. Save her he did, and that thoroughly; the hosts of the Cimbrians and Teutones were utterly cut off; the Massaliots fenced in their vineyards with the bones of the slaughtered Northmen. Marius was ranked with Romulus and Camillus as the Third Founder of Rome; men poured out drink-offerings to him

* The horrible death of Jugurtha, struggling for six days with cold and hunger in a Roman dungeon, is not the less horrible because of the fearful crimes of which he had been guilty. But why was he not simply beheaded, like Caius Pontius, like Vercingetorix, like the many other noble victims whom Rome led in bonds through her streets and murdered in cold blood? One cannot help suspecting that there was some superstitious motive which forbade the shedding of blood in this particular case. Perseus of Macedonia, according to one very doubtful story, was worried to death by being kept from sleep. If this be true, the superstition is intelligible, for Perseus had surrendered, and his slaughter would have been a breach of faith.

together with the Gods—the first beginning, it may be, of that impious flattery which Rome, a hundred years later, lavished as a matter of course upon all her tyrants. That the great salvation of Aquæ Sextiæ was due to Marius no man ever doubted; that he had but a small share in the crowning mercy of Vercellæ is told us indeed by his biographer, but it is told us on the authority of Sulla. His country hearkened to no such whispers; she hailed the yeoman of Arpinum, and not the noble Catulus, as her true deliverer; she honoured in him the union of modesty and valour, when he declined a triumph over the Teutones in which his army could not share, and while the host of the Cimbrians had yet to be overcome. Well indeed had it been for his fame had he died as he came down from his Teutonic chariot.*

Thus far had the career of Marius been great and glorious, because the baser side of his character had had as yet but small opportunity to display itself. He had raised himself, by sheer good service to his country, from a humble Volscian farm to a place alongside of heroes and demigods. He had shown all the virtues of the old Roman plebeian; if he had shown too something of the rougher side of that character, so had men no less venerated by later ages than Fabricius, than Manius Curius, than Marcus Porcius Cato. He had won victories at home and abroad; he had won the consulship, in his own words, from the nobles, like spoils from a vanquished enemy; he had, new man as he was, shown the moral courage to withstand the licentiousness of the low rabble of the Forum; he had led a dreaded King in triumph; he had saved Rome from a foe more fearful than Hannibal himself. But amid all this glory we can see the germs of his future crimes. We can see in him the beginnings of personal vanity and of incapacity to bear a rival. He envies Metellus, he envies Catulus; above all, he envies Sulla. The fierce conqueror, untutored and unrefined, half grudged, half despised, the wonderful diplomatic powers of his patrician lieutenant. It was Sulla, after all, who, by winning over Bocchus to the side of Rome,

* [See my former volume of Essays, p. 398.]

at last brought about what the arms of Metellus and Marius had failed to bring about, the final capture of Jugurtha. Both in the Jugurthine and the Teutonic wars, Sulla served under Marius in high but still subordinate offices, such as became a rising man twenty years younger than his chief. In those offices he had won fame enough to make men foretell his future greatness, but not so much fame that a man who had been five times Consul, who had won two triumphs and declined a third, had any real need to envy him. Scipio Æmilianus had nobly and generously pointed out Marius as the man who might one day fill his own place. Marius had no such feeling towards his own brilliant young officer. Sulla was young, noble, gifted with powers in which Marius knew that he himself had no part. Marius hated him from the day when he engraved the capture of Jugurtha on his ring. But years had to pass before Rome was to feel the full effects of the hatred of the plebeian against the patrician, of the mere soldier against the man who was soldier, scholar, and lawgiver in one.

After his triumph, Marius was again chosen to a sixth consulship. For this breach of all established rule there was no longer any pretext: the Northern invaders were destroyed; there was no war of any moment elsewhere; the deepest political questions were indeed ready to arise at any moment, but Rome had many citizens to whom she could intrust the care of her welfare in days of civil danger far more safely than to Caius Marius. But Marius had tasted the sweets of power, and he would not willingly come down again from his height. To shut out Metellus from the consulship, he did not scruple to ally himself with the most infamous of men. He became the partner of Saturninus and Glaucia; of Saturninus, who, when he failed in a legal contest for the tribuneship, murdered his successful competitor, and seized his place by virtue of a sham election. In this disgraceful year (B.C. 100) the reputation of Marius was damaged for ever; yet many of the measures which he supported were thoroughly good in themselves, if they had only been proposed by more reputable men, and in a more

lawful manner. Marius and his allies were the friends of the agricultural plebeians and of the Italian allies; that is, they were the friends of the best elements which Italy still contained; the mob of the Forum was in alliance with the aristocrats against them. Marius had already, without any legal right, bestowed citizenship on a whole division of the Italians who had distinguished themselves in his wars. Amid the din of arms, he could not hear the voice of the laws. To give grants of land to the deliverers of Italy was no more than the fit reward of merit; it was a course suggested by the precedents of the best days of Rome; it was a measure which, of all others, would do most to preserve the rapidly lessening class to whom Rome owed her greatness. Unluckily, thanks to the encroachments of the nobles and the thoughtlessness of the people, there were no more lands which could be honestly divided. The materials for the grant were to be found in a foul abuse of the rights of conquest. Cisalpine Gaul had been conquered from the provincials by the Cimbrians; the Roman People had conquered it again from the conquerors; it had thus, it was argued, ceased to be the property of the provincials, and had become the prize, first of the Cimbrians, and then of the Roman People. The Roman and Italian veterans were thus to be provided for at the expense of Roman subjects who had already undergone all the horrors of a barbarian invasion. On the other hand, to satisfy the mere mob, who would have no share in the division of land, a new law was brought in for distributions of corn, which this time Marius did not withstand. But the populace valued their own corn less than they envied the lands of the veterans. Honest men of all parties were indignant at the proposed robbery of the provincials; the mere oligarchs opposed anything which was proposed by Saturninus and supported by Marius. The Consul had thus brought three classes of enemies into alliance against him; the year was passed in strife and conflict, which at last grew into open rebellion. The agricultural plebeians, when their blood was once up, were no more sparing of violence than the populace; and the conduct of Marius himself was a disgraceful

mixture of low cunning and moral weakness. He neither stood by his friends nor yet by the commonwealth. He had the poor satisfaction of causing the exile of Metellus; but he had soon to go out of the way to avoid beholding his triumphant recall.*

Marius had now utterly fallen in public esteem, but his ambition was as insatiable as ever. He had found that the Forum and the Senate-house were theatres where he was likely to win no glory. But a day might come when Rome should again call for the sword of her Third Founder. A new Jugurtha, a new Teutobochus, might again make it needful that the command of the armies of the commonwealth should be intrusted to no weaker hands than those of Caius Marius. Perhaps such a happy day might even be hastened. Mithridates was rising to power in the far East: a war with him might lead to richer spoils and more stately triumphs than could be won at the cost of Numidians and Teutones. The restless Marius, under a religious pretext, actually went into Asia to do what he could to stir up strife between the Pontic King and his country.

Meanwhile Sulla was rising into eminence slowly but surely. He despised the office of Ædile, and stood at once for the prætorship. He failed from a cause which is worth remark. Sulla was the friend of King Bocchus; King Bocchus was lord of the land of lions; the friend of Bocchus should have been Ædile in regular course, and, as Ædile, he should have got lions from his friend to be butchered in such a Roman holiday as no Ædile before him had ever made. We in England do not ask for lions from our candidates; but time was when some boroughs looked to their members to supply the materials of an annual bull-bait, and the members' plate

* [It is however only fair to quote the judgement of Velleius (ii. 12) on this consulship. 'Sextus consulatus ei veluti præmium ei meritorum datus. Non tamen hujus consulatus fraudetur gloria, quo Servilii Glauciæ, Saturninique Apuleii furorem, continuatis honoribus rempublicam lacerantium et gladiis quoque et cæde comitia discutientium consul armis compescuit hominesque exitiabiles in Hostilia curia morte mulctavit.']

at the local races is not left off even in our age of humanity and purity of election. Next year Sulla got his prætorship, but he got it by being liberal of money before the election, and of lions after it. He then visited Asia as well as Marius, but he went in the legal character of Proprætor, to restore to his throne one of the friendly Kings whom Mithridates had driven out. He succeeded in his object, and he had the honour of being the first Roman who had any dealings with the distant and mighty power of Parthia. Sulla received a Parthian ambassador, and he received him in a style which, in Roman ideas, was but keeping up the dignity of the commonwealth, but which carried with it such degradation in Eastern eyes that the envoy was put to death by his sovereign for submitting to it.

Were we writing the history of Rome, and not commenting on the lives and characters of two particular Romans, there is no part of the history of those times on which we should be more tempted to dwell than on the tribuneship of the younger Marcus Livius Drusus. But neither Marius nor Sulla is mentioned in any direct connexion with the career of that remarkable and perplexing statesman. If not at the same moment, at any rate within a very short time, Drusus played the part of Marius and of Sulla in one. He restored to the Senate a share in the administration of justice; but he was also a founder of colonies, a distributor of corn, a promoter of the claim of the Italians to the franchise, He was murdered, and his laws died with him. But his tribuneship forms the turning-point in the struggle. The failure of his schemes drove the Italians to take up arms, and the Civil War of Marius and Sulla was essentially a continuation of the Social War with the Italians.*

The rivalry between Marius and Sulla was meanwhile growing more and more deadly. Both chiefs had gone into Asia; but Marius had gone only as a private man; Sulla had

* 'So erscheint er [der Bürgerkrieg] als eine Folge von dem Kriege mit den Bundesgenossen, ja in der That nur als die Fortsetzung dieses Krieges.' (Zachariä, i. 96.)

gone as a public officer. He had succeeded in the errand on which he was sent, and, if he had not extended the bounds of the Roman dominion, he had brought a new land within the terror of the Roman name. Marcus Marcius Censorinus, a strong partizan of Marius, brought a charge against Sulla, but he found it wiser to withdraw it before trial, a sort of bootless attack which is sure only to strengthen the party assailed. King Bocchus too made an offering in the Capitol, a group of golden figures which represented himself giving up Jugurtha, not to the Consul Marius, but to his lieutenant Sulla. By all these things we are told that the wrath of Marius was kindled. But we must again remember that our main authority for these events is the history of Sulla himself, and that, if Marius had had Sulla's gift of memoir-writing, he might perhaps have told a different story.

And now came the Social War; a war on whose character and objects we made some remarks in a former Essay.* Both the disease and the remedy arose from causes inherent in that system of purely municipal government which was the only form of freedom known to the ancient world. To a single city indeed that system gave the highest form of freedom; but to a large territory it carried with it a bondage worse than that of despotism. Rome was felt to be a proud and cruel mistress to her Allies; but the remedy sought for was, not to throw off her yoke—not to set up either a federal union or a representative system—but to get the franchise of the Roman city for all the people of Italy. The cause of the Allies was taken up, as it suited their purposes, by the noblest and by the vilest of the Romans, by Saturninus and Glaucia no less than by Caius Gracchus and Marcus Drusus. To Sulla and the high oligarchs no cause could be more hateful; it was a lowering

* [Velleius (ii. 15) says of the cause of the allies, 'quorum ut fortuna atrox, ita caussa fuit justissima. Petebant enim eam civitatem cujus imperium armis tuebantur; per omnes annos atque omnia bella duplici numero se militum equitumque fungi, neque in ejus civitatis jus recipi, quæ per eos in id ipsum pervenisset fastigium, per quod homines ejusdem et gentis et sanguinis, ut externos alienosque fastidire posset.']

of the dignity of Rome, and it was something which touched themselves yet more deeply. To the Roman populace the enfranchisement of the Allies was hateful on low selfish grounds, as an infringement of their monopoly of power. To the oligarchs it was hateful on a ground no less low and selfish. It would be a real strengthening of the people. They were willing enough to degrade the people by the wholesale enfranchisement of slaves and strangers, Sulla's Cornelii and the like; but to raise the people by the enfranchisement of honest yeomen and gallant soldiers from the Marsian and Samnite lands would be to make it more worthy of its constitutional functions, and therefore less subservient to their will. Then too the allied commonwealths contained nobles as proud and ancient as any of Rome's own patricians, Etruscan Lucumos and Samnite Imperators. Make these men Roman citizens, and the existing nobles must either be content to divide with them their monopoly of high office, or else they must stand by and see them pass into the most dangerous leaders of a regenerated Roman People. It was, in fact, the old struggle between patrician and plebeian over again. The Italian Allies were now what the plebeians had been in earlier days;* the union between the high aristocracy and the low populace had its parallel in the days when Appius Claudius allied himself with the mere populace against such patricians as Quintus Fabius and such plebeians as Publius Decius. The war broke out; the Allies, denied the Roman franchise, set up, as we before said, a counter Rome of their own. Rome had now to struggle, not with Epeirots and Macedonians, champions of a rival military discipline, not with northern or southern Barbarians, dreaded only for their numbers and brute force, but with men of her own race, schooled in her own wars, using her own weapons, skilled in her own tactics, led on by chiefs whom her system confined to inferior commands, but whom a more generous policy would have made her own Prætors and Consuls. In the new war success

* [See the speech of Claudius in Tacitus, Annals, xi. 24, 'Plebei magistratus post patricios: Latini post plebeios; ceterarum Italiæ gentium post Latinos.]

was very varied; but Rome had the advantage of her unity; she kept Etruria from revolting; she won back one by one the states which did revolt, by the grant of that franchise which might have been granted before. The grant was, as the Allies soon found, given in such a shape as to be little better than a cheat; but the offer was enough to do its work at the time. One by one the allied states came in, save only Samnium and Lucania, where the war still smouldered, ready, when the time came, to break forth again yet more fiercely. The neighbouring nations more nearly akin in language and habits, more easy of access to the capital, gladly became Romans; among the countrymen of Caius Pontius, the old hate, which had doubtless never wholly died away, now sprang up again to renewed life. Their wish, as we shall soon see, was not to become Romans, but to destroy Rome.

In this war both Marius and Sulla served; Sulla increased his reputation, Marius tarnished his. Some plead for him age and illness; some say that he was able to triumph over Barbarians, but not to contend with skilful generals and civilized armies. Our belief is that the key to this contrast between the two rivals is to be mainly found in their several feelings and positions. Marius went forth against the allies, as he had in civil strife gone forth against Saturninus, with only half a heart. Sulla went forth in all the concentrated energy of his mighty powers. The Roman patrician, the proud Cornelius, went forth to fight for Rome, to spare none who disobeyed her bidding or dared to parody her majesty. But the heart of the Volscian yeoman had at least half its sympathies in the camp of the enemy. He was not a traitor to betray the cause in which he armed, but he was a lukewarm supporter, who could not bring himself to fight against Marsians and Samnites as he had fought against Cimbrians and Numidians. His weakness, his want of success, lowered him still further in public esteem; perhaps the consciousness of his further fall made him pant yet more eagerly for a field where he could again display the powers which he felt were still within him.

And now came the struggle with Mithridates. The Pontic King had occupied all Asia; he had massacred every Roman and Italian to be found there; his armies had passed into Greece, and Greece had welcomed them as deliverers. He had been, and still was, in league with the rebellious Samnites. Such a foe was one very different from the Numidian who kept within his own continent; he was almost more dangerous than the Cimbrian or the Teutonic invader. Rome needed her foremost chief to win back her lost provinces and to defend what was left to her. But who was that foremost chief? Consuls were to be chosen, Consuls to wage the war with Mithridates. Twelve years before, every tribe would have voted for Caius Marius and for whatever colleague Caius Marius chose to name. Now the choice of the Roman People fell on Quintus Pompeius Rufus and Lucius Cornelius Sulla.

We have now reached the famous tribuneship of Publius Sulpicius. On this puzzling matter we think that much light has been thrown by Sulla's German biographer, Lau.* It has always been a problem how such a man as Sulpicius, the first orator of his time, an aristocrat by birth and politics, a man whose general character up to this time had stood as high as that of any man in Rome, suddenly turned into a fierce and violent Tribune like Saturninus. It has been usual to look on Sulpicius as a mere tool of Marius, to look on the unjust and unconstitutional proposal of transferring the command from Sulla to Marius as the main object of their union, and on the bill for bettering the condition of the new citizens by distributing them through all the tribes as a mere means for getting that measure through the Assembly. But we must

* [Lucius Cornelius Sulla, 187 et seqq. The account given by Velleius (ii. 18) brings strongly out the supposed incomprehensible change in the character of Sulpicius. 'P. Sulpicius tribunus plebis, disertus, acer, opibus, gratia, amicitiis, vigore ingenii atque animi celeberrimus, quum antea rectissima voluntate apud populum maximam quæsisset dignitatem, quasi pigeret eum virtutum suarum et bene consulta ei male cederent, subito pravus et præceps, C. Mario post lxx. annum omnia imperia et omnes provincias concupiscenti addixit, legemque ad populum tulit, qua Sullæ imperium abrogaretur, C. Mario bellum decerneretur Mithridiaticum, aliasque leges perniciosas et exitiabiles, neque tolerandas liberæ civitati tulit.']

again remember that the version which we have of these things is the Sullan version. The Sulpician Reform-Bill was a bill for giving to the new citizens, instead of a franchise which was a mere mockery, a weight in the commonwealth proportioned to their numbers and character. It would, if it had stood by itself, have won the approval of all, and history would have set it before us as one of the best measures of one of Rome's best men. Lau looks on it as really being so. The bill for transferring the Mithridatic war from Sulla to Marius he looks on as a mere afterthought, a stroke of defence on the side of Sulpicius after Sulla and Pompeius had violently, and indeed illegally, thrown hindrances in the way of his constitutional reforms. On this again turns the question, Who began the Civil War? That Sulla struck the first blow no man doubts; but he who begins a war is not always he who strikes the first blow, but he who makes the striking of that blow unavoidable. On the common view of the Sulpician Law, Sulla had at least that excuse; he, the Consul, withstood a base and unconstitutional conspiracy to deprive him of his constitutional powers. But the case is altered if we hold that the first blow was really struck when Sulla placed illegal hindrances in the way of a good and wholesome law of Sulpicius, and that the bill for depriving him of his command was merely a punishment for so doing, or rather a measure of self-defence against him. We see nothing in the facts of the case to contradict this view, which altogether gets rid of the inconsistent light in which Sulpicius otherwise appears. That, when he was violently opposed, he grew violent also is not very wonderful; but again we must remember that we have no memoir from Marius or Sulpicius.* The Civil War may now be said to begin; it is worth notice that the first and last act of generosity which was shown in its course

* The savage abuse of Sulpicius in Plutarch (Sulla, 8) must come from Sulla himself. Among other things, he is said to have gone about surrounded by a band of youths of equestrian rank, who were ready for anything, and whom he called his *Anti-Senate* (ἀντισύγκλητος). One would have thought it incredible that any mortal man could have confused so plain a story, and have said that Sulpicius called them 'his *Senate*.'

comes from the side of Marius. Sulla, in one of the tumults caused by the first Sulpician Law, sought shelter in the house of Marius. His rival let him go free. Sulla spared no man, because his cruelty was a cold, determined, adaptation of means to an end. The cruelties of Marius were cruelties of passion; before passion had reached its height, there was room for more generous feelings now and then to share the dominion of his heart.

We must not seek to follow the rivals through the details of the Mithridatic and the Civil Wars, and we think that we have said enough to bring out forcibly the characters of the two men. The first slaughter and pursuit of illustrious victims came from Sulla; Marius repaid them tenfold; Sulla repaid them tenfold again. Sulla was the first to lead a Roman army against Rome, but it was only the Marian party that allied itself with Rome's enemies. At the last moment of the war, when the younger Marius was besieged in Præneste, the old spirit of Samnium again sprang to life. Another Pontius, a descendant it may be of the hero who spared Rome's army and whom Rome led in chains and beheaded, burst forth to strike greater fear into Roman hearts than had been struck by Hannibal himself. He came to deliver Præneste, to deliver Marius, but he came too to root up the wood which sheltered the wolves who so long had ravaged Italy.* Rome had now to do, what in Hannibal's time she never had to do, to fight a pitched battle for her very being close to her own gates. Sulla had saved the Roman power at Chairôneia and Orcho-

* [The character of this stage of the war is brought out with wonderful vigour by the Italian memories of Velleius (ii. 27). 'Pontius Telesinus dux Samnitium, vir domi bellique fortissimus penitusque Romano nomini infestissimus, contractis circiter quadraginta millibus fortissimæ pertinacissimæque in retinendis armis juventutis, Carbone ac Mario consulibus, abhinc annos cxi, Kal. Novembribus ita ad portam Collinam cum Sullam dimicavit ut ad summum discrimen et eum et rempublicam perduceret. Quæ non majus periculum adiit Hannibalis intra tertium milliarium castra conspicata, quam eo die quo circumvolans ordines exercitus sui Telesinus, dictitansque adesse Romanis ultimum diem, vociferabatur eruendam delendamque urbem, adjiciens numquam defuturos raptores Italicæ libertatis lupos; nisi silva, in quam refugere solerent, esset excisa.']

menos; he now saved Rome herself when he overcome Pontius before the Colline Gate. But the salvation of Rome was the destruction of Samnium and Etruria. Whatever work the hand of Sulla found to do, he did it with all his might.

At first sight Sulla seems to have lived wholly in vain. To restore the power of the Roman aristocracy was a scheme vainer than the scheme of the Gracchi for regenerating the Roman People. This part of Sulla's work was soon swept away; but, because part, even the chief part, of a man's work comes to nothing, it does not follow that he leaves no lasting results behind him. Charles the Great himself seems to many to have lived in vain, because Gaul and Germany have not, for nearly a thousand years, obeyed a single ruler. Those who thus speak do not see that the whole later history of Germany and Italy bears the impress of his hand for good and for evil. So the political work of Sulla soon perished; but as the codifier of the Roman criminal law, he ranks as a forerunner of Theodosius and Justinian, and in another way his work is still living at this day. It was Sulla who first made Rome truly the head of Italy. He crushed every other nationality within the peninsula; he plucked down and he built up till he made all Italy Roman. His harrying of Samnium still abides in its fruit; southern Italy never recovered from it; that Apulia and Calabria are not now what Lombardy and Tuscany are is mainly the work of Sulla. But that every Italian heart now looks to Rome as the natural centre of Italy is the work of Sulla too. From his day to ours, Rome, republican, Imperial, or Papal, has kept a supremacy without a rival. When Italy was most divided in the middle ages, Rome was still the object of a vague reverence which no other city could share with her. And now Italy is felt to be cut short till she can win back what every Italian looks on as her capital. Had Pontius carried out his threat, had he won, as once he seemed likely to win, in that most fearful of battles by the Colline Gate, had he and Mithridates together so much as seriously

weakened the Roman power, the fate of Italy and the world must have been far different from what it has been. The first King of Italy who enters Rome may indeed sit on the throne of Cæsar, but he will reign in a city preserved for him by Sulla.*

Why is it that those two names, Sulla and Cæsar, call up such different feelings? Of the two Dictators, one is never spoken of without abhorrence, the other is never spoken of without some degree at least of admiration. Yet there is much likeness in the two men, and there are points in which Sulla has the advantage. Sulla and Cæsar alike were at once generals, statesmen, scholars, and profligates. On the military details of their campaigns military men must decide; but the results of the warfare of Sulla were assuredly not less than the results of the warfare of Cæsar. If Cæsar conquered Gaul, Sulla reconquered Greece and Asia; if Cæsar overthrew Pompeius, Sulla overthrew Pontius Telesinus. The political career of Sulla is far more honourable and consistent than that of Cæsar. Both led armies against their country; both gave out that they were driven to do so only by the intrigues of their enemies. Sulla struggled, we might say for a principle, at any rate for a party, at any rate for something beyond himself; he scorned the gewgaws of royalty; he aspired not to keep perpetual dominion for himself, still less to found a dynasty of Kings or Dictators in his own house. Cæsar's career was purely selfish; it may be that the sway of one was at the moment the best thing for Rome and the world; it may be that Cæsar knew and felt this; still his career was a selfish one. He sought his own advancement; he sank even to the low ambition of titles and ornaments; he wanted to be called a King, and to wear a diadem. As private men, there is little to choose between the two; both were steeped in every vice—refined, accomplished, scholar-like, debauchees. Why then do we hate Sulla, and in a manner love Cæsar? Success may have something to do with it; Sulla's aristocracy passed

* [Italy has again won back her capital; whether the man who saved Rome was remembered at the moment may be doubted.]

away; Cæsar's Empire fell for a moment, but it had strength enough to rise again under his adopted son, and to live on, we may almost say, till the present hour. The other Dictator has left no such memorials before our eyes and ears; no month is called Cornelius, no modern potentate calls himself Sulla as his proudest title. But this is not all: the real difference lies much deeper. Cæsar, with all his crimes and vices, had a heart. He was a man of battles, but not a man of proscriptions. He was a warm friend and a generous enemy.* In one point of view, Sulla's was the wiser policy. Sulla never spared or forgave, and he died in his bed; Cæsar forgave, and he died by the daggers of those whom he had forgiven. Most men indeed would choose the bloody death of Cæsar—a death which admirers might call martyrdom—rather than the foul and lingering disease of Sulla. But there is the fact; the merciful conqueror died by violence, the wholesale murderer went unmolested to his grave. Sulla really had in him more of principle than Cæsar; but Cæsar was a man, Sulla was like a destroying angel. Cæsar one might have loved, at Sulla one could only shudder; perhaps one might have shuddered most of all at the careless and mirthful hours of the author of the proscription. Great he was in every natural gift; great, one might almost say, in his vices; great in his craft of soldier and ruler, great in his unbending will, great in the crimes which human wickedness never can outdo. In his strange superstition, the most ruthless of men deemed himself the special favourite of the softest of the idols with which his heaven was peopled. We too can acknowledge the heaven-sent luck of Sulla, but in another sense. If Providence ever sends human instruments to chastise a guilty world, we may see in the all-accomplished Roman aristocrat, no less than in the Scythian savage, one who was, beyond all his fellow-men, emphatically the Scourge of God.

* [To Roman enemies certainly; but Vercingetorix must not be forgotten. No captives were slain at the triumph of Pompeius.]

# IX.

## THE FLAVIAN CÆSARS.

*A History of the Romans under the Empire.* By Charles Merivale, B. D.* Vols. VI. and VII. London, 1858–62.

We are sorry that Mr. Merivale has made up his mind to bring his work to an end at a point earlier than that which he first fixed upon. His first purpose was to carry on his history to the time of Constantine; he has now ended it with the death of Marcus Aurelius. Each of these points makes a good ending for the book, because each marks the end of a distinct period in the annals of the Empire. We should have better liked the later date, partly because it marks the completion of a still more marked change than the other, partly because it would have given us the advantage of Mr. Merivale's companionship over a longer space. By leaving off where he has left off, Mr. Merivale indeed avoids any show of rivalry with Gibbon. He now leaves off where Gibbon begins, and the two may be read as a consecutive history. But we do not think that Mr. Merivale, or any scholar of Mr. Merivale's powers, need be frightened off any portion of the wide field between Commodus and the last Constantine, simply through dread of seeming rivalry with Gibbon. That Gibbon should ever be displaced seems impossible. That wonderful man monopolized, so to speak, the historical genius and the historical learning of a whole generation, and left little indeed of either for any of his contemporaries. He remains the one historian of the eighteenth century whom modern research has neither set aside nor threatened to set

* [Now D.D. and Dean of Ely.]

aside. We may correct and improve in detail from the stores which have been opened since Gibbon's time; we may write again large parts of his story from other, and often truer and more wholesome, points of view. But the work of Gibbon, as a whole, as the encyclopædic history of thirteen hundred years, as the grandest of historical designs carried out alike with wonderful power and with wonderful accuracy, must ever keep its place. Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too. But, for that very reason, the scholar who reproduces any particular part of Gibbon's History, Dean Milman or Mr. Finlay,—we wish we could add Mr. Merivale,—does not really enter into any rivalry with his great predecessor. The two things are different in kind, and each may be equally good in its own way. We do not think of comparing the man who deals with the whole of a vast subject with the man who deals—necessarily at far greater detail—with one particular part of it. And, after all, we hardly feel that we have reached Gibbon's proper and distinctive field, till we have reached a later period than that which he and Mr. Merivale would have had in common. Gibbon is before all things the historian of the transition from the Roman world to the world of modern Europe. But that transition can hardly be said to have openly begun till we reach the point which Mr. Merivale at first set before him as the goal of his labours.

Still, as it is, Mr. Merivale has the advantage of occupying, absolutely without a rival in his own tongue, the period of history which he has chosen for himself. It is only in his opening volumes that he comes into competition with Arnold, and there only with Arnold before he had reached the fulness of his powers. The history of the Emperors he has, among writers of his own class, wholly to himself. Yet it must not be thought that he owes his vantage-ground solely to the lack of competition. His history is a great work in itself, and it must be a very great work indeed which can outdo it within its own range. In days of licensed blundering like ours, it is delightful indeed to come across the sound and

finished scholarship, the unwearied and unfailing accuracy, of Mr. Merivale. It is something to find, for once, a modern writer whom one can trust, and the margin of whose book one has not to crowd with corrections of his mistakes. On some points we hold that Mr. Merivale's views are open to dispute; but it is always his views, never his statements. With Mr. Merivale we may often have to controvert opinions which are fair matters of controversy; we never have to correct blunders or to point out misrepresentations. We have somewhat of a battle to fight with him, so far as he is in some sort an advocate of Imperialism; but it is all fair fighting with a fair and moderate advocate. Compared with Arnold's noble third volume, Mr. Merivale's narrative seems heavy, and his style is cumbered with needless Latinisms, savouring, sometimes of English newspapers, sometimes of French historians and politicians. Still he always writes with weight and clearness, often with real vigour and eloquence. That he is lacking in the moral grandeur of Arnold, his burning zeal for right, his unquenchable hatred of wrong, is almost implied in the choice of his subject and the aspect in which he views it. But the gift of rising to the dignity of a prophet without falling into the formal tediousness of a preacher is something which Arnold had almost wholly to himself. And even that gift had its disadvantages. Arnold could have written the history of the Empire only in the spirit of a partizan. Arnold was never unfair, but the very keenness of his moral sense sometimes made him unjust. He was apt to judge men by too high a standard. Mr. Merivale's calmer temper has some advantages. If he does not smite down sin like Arnold, he lets us see more clearly the extenuating circumstances and temptations of the sinner. He has, as we think, somewhat of a love of paradox, but it is kept fairly in check by a really sound and critical judgement. While we cannot help setting down Mr. Merivale as, in some degree, an apologist of Imperial tyranny, we are never sorry to see any cause in the hands of an apologist so competent and so candid. Indeed, when we compare his history with the fanatical advocacy of

Mr. Congreve, we hardly feel that we have any right to call him an apologist at all. *

We said that both the point at which Mr. Merivale first intended to stop, and that at which he has actually laid down his pen, each marked the close of a distinct period in the Imperial history. The history of the Roman Empire is the history of two tendencies, working side by side, and greatly influencing one another. The one is the gradual change from the commonwealth to the avowed monarchy; the other is the gradual extension of the name and character of Romans over the inhabitants of the whole empire. Of the former the beginnings may be seen for some time before the usurpation of either Cæsar; of the latter we may trace the beginnings up to the very foundation of the Roman city. The age of Constantine, the point first chosen by Mr. Merivale, marks the final and complete triumph of both these tendencies; it is also marked by the first appearance, as really visible and dominant influences, of the two great elements of modern life—the Christian and the Teutonic element. The mere beginnings of both of course come far earlier, but it was in the third century that they began directly and visibly to influence the course of Roman affairs. When the Christian Emperor reigns at Constantinople, when all purely pagan and all local Roman ideas have become the merest shadows, when Cæsar presides in the Councils of the Church and has to defend his Empire against Goths and Vandals, we feel that the purely classical period is over, that the middle ages have in truth begun. The last Constantine hardly differs so much from the first as the first does from the first Augustus. Here then is the most important stopping-point of all. But the tendencies which reached their height under Constantine had been working all along. It was Diocletian rather than Constantine who really forsook the Old Rome; what Con-

* [Mr. Congreve's Lectures on the Roman Empire of the West are perhaps best remembered through the crushing review by Mr. Goldwin Smith in the Oxford Essays.]

stantine did was to find a better and more lasting place for the New.* From Diocletian onwards, Rome never won back her place as an Imperial dwelling-place. This forsaking of the local Rome was indeed the consummation of the tendency whose first beginning we see in the mythical history of Romulus and Titus Tatius. Quirites, Latins, Italians, Provincials, had all become equally Romans. The common master of all might dwell, as the needs of his Empire bade him, at Nikomêdeia or at Byzantium, at Milan or at York, anywhere rather than in the true Roman city itself. On the other hand, this forsaking of Rome had a most important influence on the future history of the world. When Cæsar definitely changed from a republican magistrate into an avowed despot, he forsook the scene of the old republican memories. Those memories were therefore able to keep on a certain vague and fitful life down to our own age; and, what proved of greater moment still, the departure of the Emperor left room for the developement of the Pope. Had the successor of Augustus and the successor of St. Peter gone on dwelling within the same walls, the Patriarch of the Old Rome might never have reached any greater height than the Patriarch of the New. The age of Constantine then is, above all others, the point where old tendencies find their consummation, and where new tendencies find their beginning. We should be well pleased if Mr. Merivale would, even now, think over his decision, and carry his history at least down to this most important æra of transition.

Here then is the great turning-point, at the change begun by Diocletian, and completed by Constantine. But, in the course of the three hundred years which divide them from Augustus, we may make several convenient resting-places. One of these is to be found at the extinction of the first Cæsarean line in Nero. The founder of the Empire himself was a Julius, or a patrician at all, only by adoption; but both he and his successors, down to Nero, were Cæsars according to that familiar legal fiction, and both Augustus himself and all his successors

* [See above, p. 238.]

but one had real Julian blood in them by the female line.* But with Nero the family succession, even as a matter of legal fiction, came wholly to an end. Whatever family sentiment might cleave to the divine race, to the heirs and kinsmen, if not the literal offspring, of the deified Dictator, came to an end with the last and vilest of the stock. The line of Æneas and Aphroditê was at an end; their place was now open to every Roman, a name which was soon to take in every free inhabitant of the Roman Empire. Here then is one marked point of change. The Cæsar Augustus who owed his power purely to the vote of the Senate or to the acclamation of the soldiers was something different from the Cæsar Augustus around whom lingered a kind of religious reverence as the representative of Gods and heroes. On the fall of the Julii, after a short period of anarchy, followed the Flavii. Vespasian came nearer to founding a real hereditary dynasty than any Emperor before him, or indeed than any that came after him, till we reach the second Flavian dynasty, the house of Constantine. Vespasian was followed by his two sons, his only offspring, in peaceful succession. On the death of Domitian, Nerva was peacefully chosen, and from him the Empire passed, by a series of adoptions, to Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus. At the extinction of this artificial house of the Antonines we may place, with Mr. Merivale, another great break. We have now lost anything like a dynasty; the last traces of the hereditary feeling are seen in the attempt of Severus to connect himself with the Antonines, and in the further attempt to connect the Syrian youths Elagabalus and Alexander with Severus. But the unbroken line of adopted Emperors, which begins with Nerva, ends with Commodus. Here is the real break. Mr. Merivale should, in

* The grandmother of Augustus was a Julia, a sister of the Dictator. Caius was the grandson, and Nero the great-grandson, of Julia, the daughter of Augustus, through their mothers, the elder and younger Agrippina. Claudius, though not a descendant of Augustus, was a grandson of his sister Octavia, and therefore had as much Cæsarean blood in him as Augustus himself. Tiberius alone was a purely artificial Cæsar, a complete stranger in blood to the Julian house.

consistency, have at least taken in Commodus in his history as well as his father. But it is with Commodus that Gibbon begins, and Marcus makes a more impressive and honourable ending for his Imperial series.

The period dealt with in Mr. Merivale's last volume, the period from Vespasian to Marcus Aurelius, is distinguished in many ways, both from the days of the Julian dynasty which went before it and from the days of military anarchy which came after it. In most respects it contrasts very favourably with both periods. From the accession of Vespasian in A.D. 69 to the death of Commodus in A.D. 193, the Empire was under a really settled government. Of nine Emperors seven were good rulers, and those seven died—we were going to say, in their beds, only the first of them, as all the world knows, died standing. Two only, the tyrants Domitian and Commodus, died by violence, and they died, not by military insurrection, but by private conspiracy. In both cases a virtuous successor was at once found. The death of Commodus and the accession of Pertinax read like a repetition of the death of Domitian and the accession of Nerva. But the military element was now too strong; Emperors were for the future to be set up and put down at the will of the army; most of them were murdered by their soldiers or by their successors; till Rome, under her Imperial High Pontiff, became like the grove of Juno at Aricia in old times:

> 'Those trees in whose deep shadow
> The ghastly priest doth reign,
> The priest who slew the slayer,
> And shall himself be slain.'

In fact, with a few short exceptions, the whole period of ninety-two years, from Pertinax to Diocletian, seems little more than an expansion on a gigantic scale of the year of anarchy between Nero and Vespasian. With the organized despotism of Diocletian an approach to settled order begins again, a very imperfect approach as compared with the time of the Flavii and the Antonines, but still a vast improvement on the fearful century which went before it.

We thus get three great settled periods—the Julian dynasty, the Flavian and Antonine period, and the period of Diocletian and Constantine; the first being divided from the second by a short, and the second from the third by a long, interval of military anarchy. Three sets of princes, whose names, order, and actions it is easy to remember, are divided by groups of others, who flit by, one after another, like a procession of ghastly shadows. This sort of alternation goes on down to the last days of the Byzantine Empire. The groups and dynasties of Emperors which we remember, the houses of Theodosius, Justin, Heraclius, Leo, Basil, Komnênos, Angelos, and Palaiologos, are divided from one another by groups of ephemeral princes, who rise, fall, and are forgotten. And something analogous, though of course not owing to the same cause, may be seen in the succession of the Popes as well as of the Cæsars. A group of Pontiffs of some mark, each of whom reigned for some years and whose actions live in the memory, is divided from another group of the same kind by a herd of momentary Popes, pressing on one another with puzzling haste, and who seem to have come into being only in order to add to the number of Johns, Gregories, or Leos. But perhaps no group in the whole line, either of Popes or of Emperors, is so clearly marked out as that of which, and especially of its first three members, we are about to treat somewhat more at length. This is the series of nine Cæsars which begins with Vespasian and ends with Commodus, among whom we mean more especially to dwell on the three Flavii, Vespasian himself and his two sons.

The nature and origin of the Imperial sovereignty has been well explained by Mr. Merivale in one of his earlier volumes. The causes which made it a kind of necessity we have ourselves spoken of in a former essay.* The constitution of the Roman Commonwealth, which had worked so well as the constitution of a single city, broke down when it was applied to the government of an Empire which took in all the nations

* See above, p. 264.

around the Mediterranean. A federal or a representative form might have done something to lessen the evil; but both of them were practically out of the question. As long therefore as the Commonwealth lasted, the essentially municipal government of a single city held absolute sway over the whole Roman dominion. The only way by which the subject races, the Latins, Italians, and Provincials, could be admitted to any share in the general government was by clothing them—sometimes as individuals, sometimes as whole communities—with the local franchise of the Roman city, a franchise which could be exercised nowhere but in the Roman city itself. It was not till the votes of the people had ceased to be of any importance that Augustus devised a plan by which the votes of non-resident citizens might be collected in their own towns. Such a system was too unnatural to last. The Empire itself was a relief. If, instead of our representative constitution, the supreme power over the whole of the British dominions were vested in a primary Assembly of the citizens of London, even though every inhabitant of Great Britain received the local franchise, we should most likely welcome any Cæsar or Buonaparte who would deliver us from such a state of things. This tendency towards monarchy may be traced back at least to the days of Marius and Sulla,—even, according to Mommsen, as far back as those of Caius Gracchus. The usurpation of Cinna, the dictatorship of Sulla, the extraordinary commands and the sole consulship of Pompeius, the dictatorship of the first Cæsar, were all steps in the same direction. Cæsar indeed dared to clutch at actual kingship, but popular feeling was too strong for him; and a thousand years had to pass before any man ventured to call himself King of the Romans. The second Cæsar took warning, and established a virtual despotism on a purely republican groundwork. The form of the Roman monarchy may be best described as an extraordinary commission which went on for ever. The republic was not abolished; Senate, People, Magistrates, retained their old rights; but certain powers were specially vested in one particular magistrate, which practically cut down all the rest

to shadows. A single citizen was at once Imperator of the army, Prince of the Senate, and High Pontiff of the national religion. If he was not actually Consul, one vote clothed him with the active powers of the consulship; if he was not actually Tribune, another vote clothed him with the negative powers of the tribuneship.* At once Consul and Tribune within the city, he held the authority of Proconsul in every province of the Commonwealth. A Magistrate clothed with such accumulated powers, one who held all at once the various offices which were meant to act as checks upon one another, one who could at once command as Consul and forbid as Tribune, was practically as absolute a ruler as any King or Tyrant. Still, in form he was not a King, but a Magistrate; the various powers and titles which together made up sovereignty had to be specially conferred on each succeeding Emperor; they were not always conferred by a single vote, nor always accepted at once by the prince on whom they were pressed. Augustus indeed would not even accept his special powers for life; he had them renewed to him over and over again for periods of five or ten years. The Cæsar was thus in truth an absolute monarch, and his Greek subjects, from the very beginning, did not scruple to give him the kingly title.† But in theory he was only a citizen, a senator, a magistrate—the first of citizens, the first of senators, the first of magistrates. Doubtless there was something of solemn hypocrisy in all this; but the peculiar hidden nature of the Imperial power had some very practical results. As compared

* Each Emperor commonly assumed the actual consulship at least once, often much oftener. Augustus could not assume the actual tribuneship, because, though a plebeian by birth, he had been adopted into the patrician house of the Julii. Hence both he and succeeding Emperors obtained the grant of the tribunitian power without holding the office, and it was in this particular tribunitian power, more than in anything else, that their sovereignty was felt really to dwell.

† The formal equivalent of *Imperator* is of course *αὐτοκράτωρ*; but it is clear from the New Testament, to go no further, that the provincials freely spoke of even the Julian Cæsars as *βασιλεύς*. It is curious to trace how, in the progress of the Empire, *βασιλεύς* obtained the special sense of *Emperor*, while mere Kings were only *ῥῆγες*.

with acknowledged kingship, we shall hardly be wrong in saying that it made the rule of a good Emperor better, and the rule of a bad Emperor worse.

The Cæsar then and his family had no court, no position wholly distinct from that of other Roman nobles. The very fact that the Roman Empire took in the whole civilized world of itself hindered the growth of any royal caste. There were no foreign princesses for the Emperor to marry; there was no privileged order out of whom candidates were to be chosen for the vacant throne. Any man of Roman birth might, by election, adoption, or force, become Cæsar and Augustus; no man of other than Roman birth could dream of such a post for a moment. Any woman of Roman birth might become the wife and mother of Cæsars and Augusti; but the thought of a foreign Queen, the daughter of Ptolemy or the daughter of Herod, was something from which every Roman shrank as an abomination. And the citizen who was thus raised to the first rank among citizens was not placed in any position outwardly to lord it over his brethren. Practically they were his slaves, but no court-etiquette reminded them of their slavery. The Emperor gave his vote in the Senate like another Senator; as Prince of the Senate he gave the first vote; but it was open either to patriots or to subtle flatterers to vote another way. His household was like that of any other Roman noble; he mixed with other Roman nobles on terms of social equality; he had no crowns and sceptres, no bendings of the knee, no titles of Majesty or Highness. The master of the world was addressed by his subjects by the simple name of Cæsar, half his hereditary surname, half his official title. No Chief Butlers or High Falconers or Lord Stewards swelled the pomp of an Augustus; no Cornelia or Æmilia waited as Maid of Honour or Lady in Waiting upon the bidding of the proudest Augusta. Such personal services as the first of citizens needed were done for him, as for all other citizens, by the hands of his own slaves and freedmen. No Roman would have felt himself honoured by tying the Imperial shoe-latchet or serving at the Imperial table. It

was unusual to appoint any but freedmen even to really honourable offices in the Imperial service.* The children and kinsfolk of the monarch were not Princes and Princesses; they were magistrates, Senators, or simple citizens, according to the rank which they might personally reach.† We might perhaps say, that under the best Emperors the Senate filled the place of a constitutional King, while the Emperor was its inevitable and irremovable Prime Minister. His position was that of a virtually absolute monarch; but he was a monarch who reigned without a particle of royal show, who consulted the Senate on all matters, and respected the formal functions of other magistrates. And surely such a position has something in common with the position of the private peer or commoner, undistinguishable from other peers or commoners, who practically commands the sovereign who is his formal master, whose word can create the Dukes, Archbishops, and high officers of the state, after whom, when he has created them, he humbly walks, as many degrees their inferior in formal rank. ‡

It is evident that this lack of what we may call personal royalty had, in the hands of the better Emperors, the effect of greatly lightening the yoke of their practical despotism. The Romans were slaves, but the badges of their slavery were not ostentatiously thrust in their faces. The will of Cæsar had practically as much effect as the will of a barbarian King; but it was exercised in such a way that the Romans could, with

* Spartianus (Hadr. 22) says that Hadrian was the first to employ Roman knights, even in what we should think the honourable office of private secretary. 'Ab epistolis et libellis primus equites Romanos habuit.' But according to Tacitus (Hist. i. 58), Vitellius had long before employed knights in all the offices usually filled by freedmen. 'Ministeria principatûs, per libertos agi solita, in equites Romanos disponit.' Probably the innovation of Vitellius was not followed by his successors, and had therefore been forgotten in the time of Hadrian.

† Claudius Cæsar, for instance, held no office at all till his nephew Caius made him Consul. Till then, he seems not to have been a Senator, therefore he was only a knight.

‡ [This comparison was of course meant to apply only to the relations of the Prime Minister to the King, as compared with those of the Emperor to the Senate, not at all to the relation of the Prime Minister to Parliament or to the nation.]

just pride, compare the dominion of Law under which they lived with the arbitrary rule of the Parthian despot. The good side of this civil sovereignty is never so clearly shown as during the Flavian and Antonine reigns. Under such princes the forms of the Commonwealth had a practical good effect. They allowed greater scope for the good intentions of the ruler, and they removed him from many of the temptations of an acknowledged monarch. The good Emperors were men of various personal dispositions, but they all agreed in the general character of their rule. Trajan the new Romulus and Antoninus the new Numa, the homely plebeian Vespasian and the meek philosopher Marcus, all agreed in the strictly legal nature of their government, in their deference to the Senate, in their respect for the old traditions of the Commonwealth. The forms of modern royalty would have altogether hindered the simple and genial mode of life which, in the persons of the good Emperors, veiled and lightened the reality of their absolute power.

But, if the peculiar nature of the Imperial power gave a wider field to the goodness of the good Emperors, there can be no doubt that it heightened the wickedness of the bad. It is plain that the deeds of some of the worst Cæsars are wholly without parallel in the annals of European royalty in any age. Both the Macedonian kingdoms of old and the kingdoms of modern Europe have been disgraced by many cruel, foolish, and profligate monarchs; but it would be hard to find the like of Caius or Nero or Elagabalus. A perfect parallel, we suspect, could hardly be found even in the worst Oriental despotism. So far as there ever was any approach to it in Europe, it must be looked for, not among the lawful Kings of any age, but among some of the worst of the Tyrants of old Greece and of mediæval Italy. But even the worst of these—and bad enough they were indeed—hardly supply any real parallel to the frantic excesses of combined lust and cruelty which we see in the vilest of the Emperors. Several of them, we may believe, had, in some sort, lost their senses. Caius, it is clear, at last became a mere madman. But if

they lost their senses, it was through the practice of unrestrained wickedness that they lost them. And here comes in the seeming paradox that the Cæsar, the first citizen, the Consul, the High Pontiff, the social equal of other patricians, had really, because he was all this, more means given him for the practice of unrestrained wickedness than even an Eastern despot. The formal etiquette of royalty, the traditional restraints and trammels which check the personal action even of an absolute monarch, if they cut him off from much good, cut him off also from much evil. The position of a King exposes him to many temptations, but it also provides him with some safeguards. The worst King commonly retains some regard for the dignity of his person and office; even a Sultan finds his caprices checked by various conventional forms which it is not easy for him to escape from. A King who cannot set foot in public without being surrounded by a certain degree of ceremony cannot play off before the world the utterly mad freaks of the worst of the Roman Cæsars. He may be cruel, he may be lustful; but the very necessity of his position drives him in some degree to moderate, or at any rate to veil, both his cruelty and his lust. The influence of Christianity and of modern European civilization has doubtless largely helped towards this happy result, but it is not the whole cause; the excesses of the Roman Cæsars stand, as we have said, alone, even in the ancient and heathen world. If we find a feeble approach to Imperial cruelty in a few Sicilian Tyrants, it is precisely because they were Tyrants, and therefore were not under the same restraints, either of shame or of usage, as a lawful King. The will of the Roman Cæsar was practically unrestrained; and, precisely because he was merely Cæsar and not King, he was set free from the moral restraints of royalty. That lack of court-etiquette which enabled Vespasian and Antoninus to live on terms of equality with virtuous Senators no less enabled Nero and Commodus to live in a partnership of unutterable vice with the very vilest of mankind. The pride of the Roman citizen, which looked on personal service to the sovereign as the duty of slaves and

freedmen, handed over a weak or viciously disposed Emperor to the unrestrained influence of the basest and most rapacious of flatterers. The corrupting influence of the Imperial position on a mind at all predisposed to evil is clearly shown by the fact that nearly all the worst Emperors began well. The reigns of even absolute princes under other forms of administration do not often show the utter contrast which we see between the first and the last days of Caius or Nero or Domitian.

The unacknowledged character of the Imperial power had also another evil effect, and that one which is most strongly marked in the reigns of the good Emperors. The only advantage or palliation of the Imperial despotism was that it allowed, better than the Commonwealth could allow, of the fusion together of all races within the Empire, and of the extension of equal rights to all the subjects of a common master. The boon was, after all, a very poor substitute either for national independence or for full federal or municipal freedom; still it was better than the absolute bondage of the whole world to the Senate and People of a single city. But the republican forms which were kept on under the Empire tended greatly to check this result. The Empire had its local habitation in the one city just as much as the republic had.* As Consul, Tribune, High Pontiff, and Prince of the Senate, the Cæsar was nowhere fully at home but in the capital; even in the provinces he appeared as the Imperator of the Roman army, as the Proconsul of the ruling city. All this tended to keep the provinces in a state of greater inferiority than if their ruler had been an avowed King, who held equal powers over all his dominions, and who was equally at home in every part of them. Every period of reform, while the old constitution kept any shadow of life, took the shape of a reaction, of a falling back upon old Roman traditions. Now those traditions were of course wholly founded on the one principle of the greatness of the local Rome; they taught the wide difference

* [I was of course thinking mainly of the Julian, Flavian and Antonine periods; at all events of the times before the changes represented by Diocletian and Constantine.]

between the citizen, the stranger, and the slave; their whole object was Roman conquest and Roman dominion. The Dictator Cæsar seems, more than any one either before or after him, to have risen above these local prejudices; but they reigned in full force from Sulla to Trajan. Cæsar wished to be King over the subjects of Rome, doubtless as a step to being King over Rome herself. He filled the Senate with Gauls, and gave away the Roman franchise broadcast. But when his successor found that the dream of avowed royalty was hopeless, he necessarily fell back upon the traditions of republican exclusiveness. Augustus crucified, or sent back into slavery, the enfranchised slaves who had fought under Sextus Pompeius. His legislation threw hindrances in the way of any large manumission of that wretched class. Such legislation was a sin against the rights of mankind, but it was absolutely necessary if the Roman people was to keep up any kind of purity as a dominant race. Claudius—whom, as far as intention goes, we may fairly rank among the better Emperors—did something for the slave class, but he most likely thought himself a new Scipio or Æmilius when he destroyed the freedom which Lykia had kept down to his time. The Imperial antiquary doubtless rejoiced in adding a province to the Empire at each end. Nero, on the other hand, had no Roman feelings at all; he hated the Senate which was the resting-place of Roman traditions, while he sought after a certain popularity both among the provincials and among the mixed multitude which called itself the People of Rome. But even he did nothing really to break down the middle wall of partition; all that he could do for his favourite Greeks was to set himself up as a kind of mock Flamininus, and to give back to them a local freedom which they had lost all power of using. In Nero the series of strictly Roman Emperors ends; the Flavii are Italians; with Nerva begins the series of provincial rulers.* But Italians and provincials alike

* See two remarkable passages of Aurelius Victor, De Cæsaribus xi. 13: 'Hactenus Romæ, seu per Italiam orti imperium rexere, hinc advenæ; nescio quoque an, ut in Prisco Tarquinio, longe meliores. Ac mihi quidem audienti

fall back for some while upon old Roman precedents. The Sabine Vespasian gathered in the last gleanings of Greek freedom. Rhodes, Byzantium, and other outlying Hellenic commonwealths had never been conquered by Rome; they had kept their independence for two hundred years after the conquest of Macedonia and Achaia. Vespasian, without any assigned reason, incorporated them in the Empire by whose provinces they had long been surrounded. The Spaniard Trajan fought and conquered as thoroughly in the interest and for the glory of the local Rome as any Camillus or Fabius of old time. It was Hadrian, as Mr. Merivale points out, who first really ruled in the interest of the whole Empire. He was the first to look on his dominions in general as something more than mere farms for the enrichment of the Prince and the People of a single town. Nero's visit to Greece was the freak of a madman; but Hadrian passed through all parts of his Empire in the spirit of a master anxious for the welfare of all alike. Through the whole period there is no doubt some truth in the remark which Tacitus puts into the mouth of Cerialis,* that the whole Empire reaped the advantage of the virtues of a good prince, while the wickedness of a bad one was most felt by those who were nearest to him. A good prince doubtless did what he could to reform the administration of the provinces as well as that of the city. But as the virtues of a good prince commonly took the form of a falling back upon antique Roman models, it followed that the better princes were commonly those who did least to break down the barriers which divided the different classes of their subjects. It is for exactly the same reason that we find so many of the best Emperors persecuting the Christians, while some of the worst showed them more favour. The better Emperors were striving to keep up the old traditions of the Common-

multa legentique, plane compertum, urbem Romanam externorum virtute, atque insitivis artibus, præcipue crevisse.' In the Epitome, xi. 15, the last two paragraphs are: 'Unde compertum est, urbem Romam externorum virtute crevisse. Quid enim Nerva prudentius aut moderatius? quid Trajano divinius? quid præstantius Hadriano?'

* Tac. Hist. iv. 74.

wealth, and at those traditions Christianity aimed the deadliest of all blows. To put the citizen and the provincial on a level, to tolerate a sect which refused the worship that every Roman owed to the Roman Jupiter, were both of them sins against the traditions of the ancient commonwealth,—sins which might well be expected to bring down the wrath of the patron Gods of Rome upon the Prince and People who endured such iniquity among them.

The Flavian age was a period of reaction—for the most part, of wholesome reaction — in every way. The Julian reigns had, at least from the death of Tiberius, been a period of licensed madness, not only of cruelty, but of folly and caprice of every kind. Claudius, well-disposed pedant as he was, always needed to be cajoled and bullied into crime by his wives and freedmen; but the crimes were done, though Cæsar hardly knew of them. Under Nero Imperial wickedness reached its height; every Roman tradition was trampled on, and the only steadfast principle of the tyrant was an abiding hatred of the Senate. Then came the fearful year of the civil war, a year full of events which must have shocked every Roman feeling as bitterly as either the murders or the fiddlings of Nero. A real national feeling was thoroughly aroused. When Vitellius led his army of Gauls and Germans into Italy, things seemed to have gone back to the days when the younger Marius allied himself with the last Samnite Pontius, or when Antonius led the forces of his Egyptian* paramour against the Commonwealth and the Gods of Rome. When the Capitol was stormed and burned by the barbarian legions, men felt that Rome had undergone a greater blow than ever Porsena or Brennus had dealt against her.† The homely Sabine burgher came to restore Rome after what was really

* We employ Roman language to express Roman feelings; but to confound the Macedonian Queen, the daughter of all the Ptolemies, with her Egyptian subjects, was pretty much—to use an illustration of Lord Macaulay's —as if one were to paint Washington as a Red Indian brandishing a tomahawk.

† See the emphatic lament of Tacitus, Hist. iii. 72.

occupation at the hands of a foreign enemy, a foretaste of future barbarian conquests, from Alaric down to our own day.* Vespasian restored the dominion of Law at least, if not of liberty, and reigned in Rome as a Roman, the Prince of the Roman Senate, the Tribune of the Roman People. He was indeed the choice, not of the Senate or People, but of an army quartered far from Rome; but it was an army warring for Rome's greatness in the hardest of her later struggles, an army which was certainly not an army of Jews and Syrians in the same way that the Vitellian host was practically an army of Gauls and Germans. But there was one thing which the new ruler needed. Rome, and the rest of the world, had long looked for something of divinity in its rulers. The lord of men must be himself something more than man. We have elsewhere spoken of the divine homage which was paid to Philip and Alexander, and, long before their day, to the Spartan Lysandros. The successors of Alexander had received, and seemingly delighted in, the same impious flattery. The Athenian People had quartered Dêmêtrios and his harem in the temple of his virgin sister Athênê, and a General of the Achaian League had sung pæans in honour of the Macedonian whom he brought to overthrow the freedom of Peloponnêsos.† So each successive Cæsar, who at Rome was only a magistrate of the Commonwealth, had received divine worship at the hands of the provincials. Rome herself was gradually taught to see something more than human in the Julian house, the descendants of Rome's divine ancestress; Augustus himself, simple citizen as he demeaned himself, did not quarrel with the belief which made him the son of Apollo; ‡ he took it kindly if men held down their eyes before the divine brightness of his countenance.

* [This was of course written while Rome was still under the yoke of her last Gaulish invaders.]

† [See History of Federal Government, i. 492.]

‡ It must be remembered that, as the connexion of Augustus with the Julian house was wholly through the female line, to give him a divine father did not throw the same slur on his human legitimacy which it did in the case of Alexander and others.

But it was hopeless to clothe Vespasian, a man with as little divinity as might be either in his countenance or in his pedigree, with any kind of godhead, either hereditary or personal. His strong good sense cast aside the flatteries of genealogists, who invented for him a descent from heroes and demi-gods. In his last illness he mocked at the usual practice of canonizing deceased Emperors; when his mortal strength was failing, he felt himself beginning to be a God. But a Roman Emperor, above all one whose rise was so remarkable as that of Vespasian, could not be left without a sanctity about him of some kind or other. The sanctity of Vespasian took a form which was characteristic of the Eastern lands in which he rose to greatness, and which was utterly unlike anything which we find in any form of Greek or Roman religion. Earlier Kings and Emperors had received divine worship, but they seem never to have exercised any divine power. But Vespasian works miracles, exactly after the likeness of the miracles in the Christian Scriptures. The blind and the lame pray him to touch them with his sacred foot, or to anoint them with his sacred spittle. For some time he withstands their importunity, but at last he goes through the needful ceremony,* and, as the story runs, works the needful cure. These tales are not to be taken as mockeries or imitations of the Christian miracles. The Old and New Testaments of themselves clearly show that miracles of healing, hardly heard of in Western religions, were, by the Jews and the neighbouring nations, looked for from all who either themselves professed to be, or were acknowledged by others as being, clothed with any special function as prophets, teachers, or reformers. Vespasian laid no claim to the prophetic office, but Eastern admirers might naturally clothe him with it. He was eminently a political reformer, and we are apt to forget how thoroughly the idea of political reformation was implied in the mission of a Hebrew prophet. In an age when a vague expectation seemed to be everywhere spread that some great

* [Compare the unwillingness of William the Third to touch for the evil. Macaulay, iii. 478.]

ruler and deliverer was coming from the East, the chief who was called from a Syrian command to the Empire of the world might well, in Eastern eyes, put on somewhat of the character of a Messiah. The religious halo thus spread about Vespasian was one of a purely Eastern kind; but as soon as he had put on a mysterious and miraculous character of any kind, the substitute had at once been found for that earlier type of divinity which had died out with the Julian name and blood Men's minds were better disposed to receive a prince who was thus clearly marked out as a favourite of the Gods; and the cure of the Alexandrian beggars, whether an instance of cringing imposture or of genuine superstition, may not have been without its share in enabling Vespasian to form what, after the ephemeral reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, might well be called a lasting dynasty.

One chief object of Mr. Merivale's present volume is to claim for the Flavian period a share in that admiration which is commonly confined to the five reigns beginning with Nerva. In his view, the accession of Nerva marks indeed an epoch, but it is an epoch, so to speak, within another. The Flavian and Antonine periods together form a whole, as distinguished from the periods before and after them. Undoubtedly the change from Italian to provincial Emperors was a real change, as is pointed out in the passages of Victor which we have already quoted. In this way, the accession of Nerva is a marked point in the Imperial history. But the cause which generally tempts us to make the fall of Domitian a point of greater moment than it really was is very different, and is indeed somewhat ludicrous. Suetonius happened to stop in his series of Imperial biographies with the life of the twelfth Cæsar. The work of Suetonius was the popular source of knowledge on the subject; the full number of twelve was a taking one; and thus arose the popular notion of the Twelve Cæsars, as if there were some wider gap between the twelfth Cæsar and the thirteenth than there was between any two of the first twelve. But, in truth, as we have already seen, the

widest gap of all comes between the sixth and the tenth, between Nero and Vespasian. We do not meet with such another marked change till we come to the point which marks off the legal government of the Antonines from the alternate military despotism and military anarchy which succeeded it. The difficulty of classing the Flavian and Antonine princes together chiefly arises from the tyranny of Domitian and his violent end, coming, as they do, in the midst of a period which is otherwise one of unbroken good government and peaceful succession. But, after all, the fall of Domitian was simply the private assassination of a single tyrant: the prætorians grumbled, but there was no civil war, no general disturbance of any kind. And again, the tyranny of Domitian must not altogether be confounded with the tyranny of some of those who went before him and of some of those who came after him. The character of this strange prince has been very carefully worked out by Mr. Merivale, and we think that his view bears a greater impress of truth than is the case with some of his Imperial portraits. We must never forget, among the many merits of Mr. Merivale, that he is still, in some degree, an apologist for the Cæsarean despotism, and that it is a kind of duty in his eyes to make out as good a case as he can for any particular Cæsar. In some of the earlier reigns, we cannot think that his success was very great. He has indeed rescued Claudius from a good deal of unmerited popular contempt; but no fair person ever could confound the weak, well-meaning, hen-pecked, antiquary with a madman like Caius or a monster like Nero. As for the others, Mr. Merivale is doubtless quite justified in his general cautions as to the nature of our materials. We have, as he says, no contemporary history of the earlier Emperors. Our authorities—Suetonius, Tacitus, Diôn—all wrote long after the time. Suetonius is a mere collector of anecdotes; Diôn loves to find fault with everybody; Tacitus writes the history of the Empire by the light of senatorial and republican traditions. Undoubtedly, in reading narratives of this sort, we must allow for a certain amount of hostile colouring. But, after making every allowance on

this score that can fairly be made, the undoubted facts, which Mr. Merivale does not dispute for a moment, are enough to stamp the Claudian Cæsars, as a whole, as a succession of some of the vilest of mankind. This or that particular story may be false; the general picture which we draw from the whole mass of stories may be exaggerated; but even scandal generally pays some regard to probability; it exaggerates real faults, but it seldom invents qualities which have no being at all. Possibly Nero may not have been quite so bad, nor Antoninus Pius quite so good, as popular belief makes them out; but there is quite evidence enough to show that Nero was very bad and Antoninus very good. After making every possible allowance, the lusts and cruelties of the early Cæsars still far surpass the average of the lusts and cruelties even of the worst tyrants. And their cruelty is a loathsome, capricious, purposeless cruelty; even Nero's abiding hatred to the Senate is quite unworthy of the name of principle, or even of party-feeling. With Domitian the case is different; he was a tyrant of a very remarkable kind; and Mr. Merivale has, as it seems to us, given a very successful and probable portrait of him and his government.

Tyrants may perhaps be divided into three classes. There are some whose cruelty is simply military or judicial severity carried too far, whose blows smite men who really deserve to be smitten, only not with so heavy a stroke. A tyranny of this kind is not inconsistent with many personal virtues, and it of itself implies a real zeal for the public good. Again, there are some tyrants whose cruelty has a definite object, who strike in order to destroy or to weaken some hostile party, who are ready to inflict any amount of suffering which suits their own ends, but who take no pleasure in oppression, and who are capable of becoming mild and beneficent rulers as soon as opposition ends. Such were the authors of both the first and the second proscription. Sulla and Augustus alike shed blood without mercy as long as anything was to be gained by shedding it; but neither of them had any appetite for slaughter and confiscation when the need for them had passed by. Lastly, there

are tyrants whose tyranny is utterly reckless and capricious, and in whom the frequent practice of cruelty seems at last to create a sort of enjoyment in cruelty for its own sake. Such was the cruelty of Caius and Nero. The second and third classes are distinguished from each other by the fact that tyrants of the second class commonly get better, while tyrants of the third class commonly get worse. The horrors of the second proscription were followed in due course by the long paternal reign of Augustus. On the other hand, both Caius and Nero began with a professed hatred to cruelty of every kind, which we have no right to assume was mere acting. The one form of tyranny is the cruelty of statesmen, reckless as to the means by which an end is to be compassed; the other is the cruelty of men in whom weakness and frivolity are united with a childish delight in the mere exercise of power. But the tyranny of Domitian was something which stands quite by itself. He may be said to have begun with a tyranny of the first type, which gradually changed into one of the third. Without being a man of any real power of mind, Domitian was neither a madman like Caius, nor a mere pedant like Claudius, nor a monster of vice and emptiness like Nero. He began as a reformer, as a restorer of old Roman manners and of the old Roman faith. He assumed, unlike earlier Emperors, a perpetual censorship, and, as Censor, he made war upon the vices and luxury of the age. There is no reason to doubt his sincerity. Everything seems to show that he started as a conscientious worshipper of the Gods of Rome, full of an honest wish to bring back Roman life to its ancient purity, and fully determined to carry on the duties of the pontificate, the censorship, and every other magistracy which he held, with the most exemplary and unsparing righteousness. The seeming inconsistency of all this reforming zeal, civil and religious, in a man of Domitian's personally depraved life, is well explained by Mr. Merivale. Neither the Gods of Rome nor the laws of Rome asked for moral purity in their votaries. They may have done so in the early ages of the Republic, but the idea of personal morality had, in Domitian's age, long been

divorced from the ideas of religious and political duty. Particular forms of vice were censured by Law, not as morally wrong, but as hurtful to the welfare of the state, or as degrading to the dignity of a Roman citizen. In so doing, the Roman Law did in truth keep within the proper limits of human legislation. The business of an earthly lawgiver is certainly not to punish sins or vices as such, but to hinder, and with that end to punish, crimes against society. The difference between Roman and modern ideas on this subject consists in the difference which the Roman Law drew between Roman citizens and other persons. The adultery of a Roman citizen and a Roman matron was a crime against the state and against the Gods. It led to the confusion of family rights and family worship; it checked the succession of the lawful race of Rome's citizens; it was a personal affront to the Gods to whom the marriage-bed was sacred. Other yet worse forms of vice were equally forbidden, as degrading to the lofty character of a citizen of Rome. But beyond these limits, neither the State nor the Gods cared for any man's private vices. Domitian, himself a man of infamous life, punished as High Pontiff the frailty of the erring Vestals, as Censor he put in force the Julian and Scantinian Laws, without any inconsistency in his own eyes or those of others. Excesses of which only strangers were the instruments did not violate the sanctity of either character. He did not scruple—so we are universally told—to live in incest with his own niece; but he had shrunk in horror from the proposal of marrying her. No doubt the one crime was a less glaring breach of formal enactments than the other.* In everything Domitian proclaimed himself as a strict and righteous minister of the ancient laws. But, when a man with no real moral principle, with no real force of character, sets himself up as the severe reformer of a corrupt age, he is almost sure to bring in worse evils than any that he takes away. The merciless exercise

* [So for several centuries of ecclesiastical history the concubinage of the Clergy was looked on as a less evil than their marriage.]

of a merely formal justice will very easily sink into capricious and indiscriminate cruelty. So it proved with Domitian. The strict reformer and unbending judge gradually sank into a tyrant, never perhaps quite so contemptible, but fully as hateful and bloodthirsty, as the vilest of those who went before him. He began by chastising real crimes, and he probably never ceased to do so in his worst days. He has at least the credit of swiftly punishing any deeds of wrong done by his governors in the provinces. But, in his zeal to spare no offender, he encouraged the vile brood of informers; and thus the innocent were often condemned, while one class at least of the worst offenders was openly favoured. At last he became utterly hardened in cruelty; after the revolt of Antonius had thoroughly frightened him, he began to live in constant fear of rebellions and conspiracies, and at last his reign became, as Mr. Merivale truly calls it, emphatically a reign of terror. And it would almost seem that the possession, and the habitually harsh exercise, of absolute power had in some measure turned his brain. Otherwise, it is certainly strange that a political and religious reformer, such as Domitian began by being, should have plunged into excesses of insolent and impious tyranny almost beyond any of the oppressors who went before him. Since the frantic Caius, no one had so openly indulged in the fancy for deification; Rome's human inhabitants and her divine protectors were alike insulted, when the modest style of the first Cæsars was exchanged for the frightful formula of "our Lord and God."* Mr. Merivale remarks that this assumption of divinity may possibly have been connected with the fact that he stood in a closer relation to deified predecessors than any earlier Cæsar. His own father, his own brother, were enrolled among the Gods; he may have learned to think that the godhead of the Flavian house was not confined to its deceased

* 'Dominus et Deus noster,' Suet. Dom. 13. *Dominus* in this formula must not be confounded with the Christian use of the word. The impiety lies wholly in the *Deus*. But *dominus*, implying a master of slaves, was a title which no magistrate under the Republic, and seemingly till now none under the Empire, had ever ventured to claim.

[See Growth of the English Constitution, p. 169.]

members, but had become incarnate in the person of its only living representative. Other freaks of moody, and generally gloomy, caprice marked the latter years of his reign, which seem to show that his intellect was at least weakened, if it had not wholly given way, Altogether, the sanctimonious pretences with which he began only served to make his tyranny more frightful in itself, and more hateful from its inconsistency. Few, if any, of the long line of Roman tyrants went out of the world as the object of a more universal hatred; the memory of none has been the subject of more universal and unalleviated condemnation.

We have closely followed Mr. Merivale in his masterly portrait of the last Flavian Emperor, the only Flavian tyrant. It is a portrait which we think may fairly be drawn from our scanty notices. In this case Mr. Merivale neither throws doubt on his authorities, nor does he say anything which can be fairly called an apology for crime. The utmost that he does is to hint that the evidence against Domitian is 'suspiciously harmonious,' and to give an 'admonitory caution' about the 'frightful temptations of his position.' But, when we find him the only thoroughly bad prince in a series of eight, we really cannot see so much excuse for him on the ground of temptations which the others contrived, more or less successfully, to overcome. We do not quarrel with Mr. Merivale's 'admonitory caution,' as we do not find that it at all leads him to try to evade the overwhelming testimony of the facts. His account of Domitian explains, without at all excusing, a sort of wickedness which took a very peculiar form. In fact, Domitian properly takes his place in the series from Vespasian to Marcus. He was indeed bad, while the others may, on the whole, be called good; still, he was a prince whose government aimed at the same general objects; his crimes were the excess and corruption of their virtues, not something utterly different and contradictory. He fairly takes his place in the series of reactionary or reforming Emperors; he became in truth as bad as Nero himself, yet his reign may be truly reckoned as part of the period of revulsion which the excesses of Nero called forth.

We have spoken throughout of the Flavian and Antonine Cæsars in that language of respect which, on the whole, they deserve. The men themselves deserve far more praise than blame. Doubtless all had their faults; those certainly had of whose actions we possess any detailed account. Few of them wholly escaped from the degrading vices of the age. Few remained wholly uncorrupted by the temptations of unrestrained power. But, on the whole, all, save Domitian, played their part well. Their faults, whether as men or as rulers, are altogether outshone by their merits. It would be easy to charge Vespasian with inflicting on his country the miseries of a civil war. But, in a moment of anarchy, when there was no legitimate or universally acknowledged Emperor, we cannot fairly blame the man best worthy to rule for obeying the call of his troops to put in his claims among others. For the special horrors of the war, for the fearful sack of Cremona, for the arbitrary and cruel acts of Mucianus and Antonius Primus, Vespasian can hardly be made personally responsible. So, when we come to Trajan, though the giving up of so many of his conquests by his successor is the best comment on their real value, we can hardly blame a Roman soldier and reformer for treading in the steps of all the most famous worthies of the Commonwealth. And, transient as were his Eastern victories, one of Trajan's conquests had results which have lasted to this day, and which take their turn among the other questions which occupy the busy pens of ambassadors and foreign ministers. The Rouman provinces, attached to the Old Rome by their language, as they are to the New Rome by their creed, bear witness to the strong hand with which Trajan founded his new dominion north of the Danube. The government of Hadrian was not free from faults; but the first prince who really cared for the provinces is entitled to lasting honour. Altogether, the Emperors of this period formed a succession of wise and good rulers, to which it would not be easy to find a parallel. We may well look with admiration on so long a period of comparative good government, when we think of what went before, and of what followed. But, while

we do every justice to men who did all that could be done in their position, we must not be blinded to the utterly unrighteous nature of that position itself. We must not forget, in the splendours of the Empire, in the virtues of many of its rulers, the inherent wickedness of the Empire itself. On this head it is well, after the extravagant advocacy of Mr. Congreve, even after the more measured apology of Mr. Merivale, to turn to the voice of truth and righteousness speaking through the mouth of Mr. Goldwin Smith. His vigorous setting forth of the essential unrighteousness of the Roman Empire is one of those utterances where simple truth of itself becomes the highest eloquence. The Roman Empire did its work in the scheme of Providence; it paved the way for the religion and civilization of modern Europe: but this is simply one of the countless cases in which good has been brought out of evil. The Empire may have been a necessary evil; it may have been the lesser evil in a choice of evils; but it was in itself a thing of evil all the same. It showed, with tenfold aggravation, all that we look upon with loathing in the modern despotisms of Austria* and Russia. The worst of modern despots is placed under some restraint by the general public opinion of the world, by the religion which he professes, by the civilization in which all Europe shares, by the existence of powerful free states side by side with despotisms, by the very jealousies and rivalries of the despotic powers themselves. But the Roman Empire stood alone in the world; there was no influence or opinion beyond it. Its subjects, even in the worst times, would hardly have gained by flying to the wilds of independent Germany, or by exchanging the civilized despotism of Rome for the barbarian despotism of Parthia. But, whatever were its causes, whatever were its results, however necessary it was in its own time, it was in itself a wicked thing, which, for so many ages, crushed all national, and nearly all intellectual, life in the fairest regions of three continents. There is life as long as old Greece keeps the

* [Austria as it then was; not the 'Oesterreichisch-ungarische Monarchie' that is now.]

least relic of her freedom; there is life again as soon as we reach the first germ of Christian and Teutonic Europe; nay, life shows itself again in the Empire itself, when its place and its object are changed, when it has taken up the championship of Christianity against fire-worship and Islam, and when it has in the end become coextensive with that artificial nation—Greek in one aspect and Roman in another—which for so many ages boasted of the Roman name. But, from Mummius to Augustus, the Roman city stands as the living mistress of a dead world; and, from Augustus to Theodoric, the mistress becomes as lifeless as her subjects. For the truest life of man, for the political life of Periklês and Aratos, of Licinius and the Gracchi, the world had now no scope; the Empire allowed but one field for the exercise of man's higher faculties, when the righteous soul of a Tacitus or a Juvenal was stirred up to brand the evil deeds of the Empire itself. The bane did, in some slight degree, prove its own antidote, when such stern preachers of truth were called forth to take the place of the courtly elegance of the hired poets of Augustus. Of the great legacy of Rome to later times, the legacy of the Roman Law, the best parts were simply inherited by the Empire from the days of the Republic. The Republic may indeed have ceased to be possible; but we may remember that, under the Republic, the virtues of Titus and Trajan would have found a field for their exercise, while there was no field for the crimes of Caius or Nero or Domitian. The Verres of a single province sank before the majesty of the Law and the righteous eloquence of his accuser: against the Verres of the world there was no defence except in the dagger of the assassin. A chain is of the strength of its weakest link, and a system of this kind may fairly be judged by the worst princes that it produces. A system under which a Nero and a Commodus are possible and not uncommon is truly a system of Neros and Commodi, though they may be relieved by a whole series of Trajans and Antonines. For the Trajans and the Antonines have their parallels elsewhere; their virtues were not the result of the Imperial system; they simply existed

in spite of it. But the crimes of Nero and Commodus are without parallels elsewhere; they are the direct and distinctive product of the system itself, when left to its own developement. In a free state Caius would have found his way to Bedlam, and Nero to Tyburn; Domitian, under the checks of the republican system, might perhaps have made as useful a Censor as Cato. We cannot end a view of even the best period of the Roman monarchy without echoing the fervent wish of the Oxford Professor that the world may never see its like again.

We have one more remark to make on Mr. Merivale's way of looking at the establishment of the Empire. He is fond of speaking of both the elder and the younger Cæsar as the chiefs of a popular party, who set up their dominion on the ruins of an oligarchy. This is of course true in a sense; the mob of Rome were favourable to Cæsar, and his party historically represented the party of his uncle Marius. But we need not take long to show what is the real nature of a pseudo-democratic despotism. It is a device which neither Cæsar had all to himself. There were Dionysii before their time, and there have been Buonapartes since. It is undoubtedly true that, in one sense, the party of Cæsar was a popular party, and that the party of the Republic was an aristocratic party; but they were not popular and aristocratic parties in any sense which would make us sympathize with the popular party against the aristocratic party. As long as there was a real Roman People, capable and worthy of political rights, we go along with all its struggles against the domination of any exclusive caste. But sympathy with a people against an oligarchy does not carry us on to sympathize with a mob against a Senate. Great as were the faults of the Roman Senate in the last stage of its freedom, it was at least the only body left where free discussion was possible; it was the only assembly where two opinions could be expressed, where the arguments for both of them were fairly hearkened to, and a free vote taken between them. As such it was the salt of the earth, the last abiding-place of freedom. And we must not carry on

into those days ideas which belong only to the older struggle between the orders. Many of the most illustrious nobles were technically plebeians; every Licinius and Cæcilius and Lutatius, the Great Pompeius, the Triumvir Antonius and the tyrannicide Brutus, Cato and Milo and Hortensius and the second Cæsar himself,—all belonged to the order which the old Appii had striven to shut out from the fasces and the senate-house. And the doors of the senate-house were not open only to those who were indeed formally plebeians, but who were practically as much members of a noble class as any Cornelius or Æmilius in Rome. A new man at Rome, as everywhere else, lay under disadvantages; but his disadvantages might be overcome, and it rested wholly with the People itself whether they should be overcome or not. That government cannot be called a mere oligarchy in which the Tribes still chose Prætors, Consuls, Censors, and High Pontiffs; where the highest places in the commonwealth were not refused to Caius Marius and Marcus Tullius Cicero. Any deliberative body where two sides can be fairly heard, whether it take the form of a democratic Assembly or of an aristocratic Senate, is essentially a safeguard of freedom, a check on the will either of a mob or of a despot. Even in the days of the Empire, the Senate, the last shadow of the free state, still kept life enough for the good Emperors to respect it and for the bad Emperors to hate it. It is then with the Senate that the sympathies of the real lover of freedom lie in the last age of the Republic, rather than with the frantic mob which disgraced the once glorious name of the Roman Commons. No assembly that ever was devised was less fitted to undertake the championship of freedom than the old Parliament of Paris; but, when the Parliament of Paris was the one representative of right against might left in all France, when the feeble opposition of the magistracy was the sole check upon a despot's arbitrary will, our sympathies lie wholly with the Parliament in all its struggles with the royal power. It is something when even a Sultan has to ask a Sheikh-ul-Islam whether his wishes are in

agreement with the Law of the Prophet. He may indeed, like our James the Second, depose a too unbending expounder of the Law, and may supply his place with one who will know no law but the prince's will; but the mere formality is something; the mere delay is something; it is something when a despot has to ask a question to which the answer may perhaps run counter to his wish. And so, as the last check on the despotism at once of the mob of the Forum and of the Cæsar on the Palatine, we still hold that the Senate where Cicero denounced Catilina and Antonius, where the last dying notes of freedom were heard from the lips of Thrasea and Helvidius, was an assembly which well deserves the grateful remembrance of mankind.

On many points then, and those points the most important of all, we look on the history of the Cæsars with widely different eyes from those of their last historian. But, on the very ground which makes us differ from him, we can never regret a difference from an advocate at once so candid and so competent. Mr. Merivale is a real scholar, in an age when real scholars are not so common that we can afford to lose or to undervalue a single one of the order. In all the highest qualities of a historian, there are few living men who surpass him. We look with sadness on his seventh volume, when we hear that his seventh volume is to be his last. If our words can have any influence with him,—and he may receive them as the words, not of flatterers, but in some degree of antagonists,—he will even now change a purpose which all scholars must have heard with sorrow, and will carry on his great work down at least to the limit which he first set before him as its close.

THE END.

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